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# GREAT BRITAIN'S PRESENT JOYS AND HOPES;

DISPLAYED

# IN TWO SERMONS,

PREACHED IN CHESTER.

THE FORMER ON THE NATIONAL THANKSGIVING DAY, DECEMBER 31, 1706. THE LATTER THE DAY FOLLOWING, BEING NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

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PSALM lxv. 11.

*Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.*

AMONG other feasts of the Lord, which the Jewish church was appointed to observe, (and many annual feasts they had for one fast,) one is called, *The feast of in-gathering at the end of the year*,[a] according to the civil computation of their year. The feast we are, this day, solemnizing with joy, in communion with all the religious assemblies of our land, being appointed by authority on the last day of the year, according to the vulgar reckoning, may be looked upon as our feast of in-gathering: in it we appear before the Lord, in whom all our joys must terminate, and to whom all our trophies must be consecrated. Remember therefore the law of those feasts, that none must appear before the Lord empty: if our hearts be here empty, what will it avail us that our congregation is full? It is the soul that appears before God: if that be empty of holy joy in God, and holy concern for the welfare of the public, which ought to fill us on such occasions, it is but the carcass and shell, without the life and kernel, of a Thanksgiving-day.

Let this feast at the end of the year be kept to the honour of that God who is the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the *First and the Last;* both the spring, and the centre, of all our glories. As we must begin every day and year with him, so with him we must end both. *For of him, and through him, and to him are all things.*

Praise is waiting for God this day in our English Zion, and to him must the vow be performed;[b] the vow of thanksgiving to God for his mercies to the land of our nativity; in the peace whereof we have our share; and in the praises whereof we are unworthy of the name of Englishmen, if we do not cheerfully bear our part. And how can we sum up our acknowledgments of God's favours to our nation, in more proper words than those of my text, *Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.* Common providence crowns every year with the goodness of God; but special providences crown some years more than others with it.

I. Every year is crowned with God's goodness. We of this land have as much reason to say so as any other people; for, like Canaan, it is a land which the eyes of the Lord our God are always upon, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.[c] He who appoints the bounds of men's habitations, has appointed very well for us: *The lines are fallen to us in such pleasant places*, as forbid us to envy the situation of any of our neighbours, or of any nation under heaven.

As we have *daily* mercies to give thanks for, in the close of every day; so we have *yearly* mercies to give thanks for, in the close of every year, even the blessings of "Heaven above," and the "Earth beneath;" for both which we are indebted to him who made heaven and earth, and continues the ordinances of both for the benefit and comfort of that mean, unworthy creature,—man.

1. The annual revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and the benefit we receive by their light and influences, in the several seasons of the year. Summer and winter crown the year; God made both, and both for the service of men,—as well as night and day.[d] The shadows of the evening are not more acceptable to the weary labourer,[e] than the winter

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[a] Exod. xxiii. 16. [b] Ps. lxv. 1. [c] Deut. xi. 12. [d] Ps. lxxiv. 16. [e] Job vii. 2.

quarters of refreshment are to fatigued armies; and then the spring, that time when kings go forth to war,[f] is as welcome to the bold and faithful soldier, as the morning is to the honest and industrious husbandman, who then goes forth to his work and to his labour.[g]

And he who made summer and winter, has made both very easy and comfortable to our land. So very temperate is our climate, and so well secured from both extremes, that the inconveniences neither of the heat in summer, nor of the cold in winter, are intolerable, nor such obstructions to business and intercourse as they are in some other countries, no farther north than Russia, nor south than Spain. So that if our land produce not such furs as the north does, and such silks as the south, we ought not to complain: nature did not provide them, because it had better provided that we should not need them. We can bid both summer and winter welcome; each are beautiful in their season, and neither are a terror to us. May the happy temper of our climate be infused into our minds, and our moderation be known unto all men!

God's covenant with Noah and his sons, by which the seasons of the year were re-settled after the interruption of the deluge, is the crown and glory of every year: and the constant and regular succession of summer and winter, seed-time and harvest,[h] in performance of that promise, is an encouragement to our faith in the covenant of grace, which is established firmly as those ordinances of heaven![i]

2. The annual fruits and products of the earth, grass for the cattle, and herbs for the service of men,[k] with these the earth is every year enriched for use; as well as beautified and adorned for show. The harvest is the crown of every year, and the great influence of God's goodness to an evil and unthankful world. And so kind and bountiful is the hand of providence herein, that we are supplied not only with necessary food, for the support of nature, and the *holding of our souls in life;* but with a great variety of pleasant things for ornament and delight. Our soul is as happy as our climate, and like that of Asher, yields royal dainties.[l]

Though all years are not alike plentiful, yet—through the wise disposal of Providence, that great house-keeper of the universe—one year serves to help out another, and so to bring in another; so that when we gather much, it proves there is not much over, and when little, there is no great lack. Or, one country supplies another; so that the extremities of famine have never sent us from our *Canaan* to sojourn in any *Egypt* for bread, but either we have had it among us, or have been able to fetch it.

It is from the goodness of God that we have our yearly corn, and out of that our daily bread, which even after a plentiful harvest we might come short of, if when we *bring it home* God did *blow upon it.*[m] In these things God does good to all, and gives them witnesses of his being and providence, his power and bounty, sending rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.[n] And these witnesses to us, will be witnesses against us, if we serve not the Lord our God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, in the abundance of the good things he gives us; but make those things the food and fuel of our lusts, which were given us to be oil to the wheels of our obedience.

Let us thank God for all the blessings of this kind, with which every year of our lives has been crowned; and let not the commonness of them lower their value with us, nor lessen our grateful sense of God's goodness to us in them; nor because they have been hitherto constant, let us therefore imagine that they come of course, or that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant: but let the praise of all those blessings which we enjoy by the constant course of nature, be given to the God of nature; to him let us own our obligations for what is past, and on him let us own our dependence for the future, lest we provoke him to *take away our corn in the season thereof.*

II. Some years are, in a special manner, crowned with the goodness of God more than other years; *Thou wilt bless the crown of the year with thy goodness,* so the Seventy read it. This year, in which by extraordinary instances, not to be paralleled in the events of former years, thou hast made known thy goodness; things which the former years expected not, and which the following years cannot forget, and will reap the benefit of. This year, which thou hast made—to excel other years, and to out-shine them in the historian's annals as much as crowned heads transcend common persons—by *reviving the work in the midst of the years,*[o] when we were ready to ask, *Where are all the wonders which our fathers told us of?*[p] And to speak of *the years of the right hand of the Most High,*[q] as what we have heard and read of, and what our fathers have told us of, but which we expected not to see in our time.

Every year was crowned with God's goodness, but not so as the sixth year was, when God made the earth to bring forth fruit three years,[r] which were to live upon the products of that. Every year was not a year of release, much less a year of jubilee. The great God never does any thing mean or little; even the common works of nature, and the common course of providence, give proofs of the infinite power and goodness of the Creator and Director of the universe: but sometimes the arm of Omnipotence is in a special manner made bare, and the treasures of divine bounty opened, in which, though

f 2 Sam. xi. 1. g Ps. civ. 23. h Gen. viii. 22.
i Jer. xxxi. 35. k Zech. ix. 17. l Gen. xlix. 20.
m Hag. i. 9. n Acts xiv. 17. o Hab. iii. 2.
p Judg vi. 13. q Lev. xxv. 21. r Ps. lxxvii. 10.

God never out-does himself, (as men are sometimes said to do upon extraordinary occasions,) he out-does what he used to do, that he may awaken a stupid and unthinking world, to see the goings of our God, our King, in his sanctuary,[s] and may proclaim himself glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, working wonders.[t]

Some expositors apply the year, here said to be crowned with God's goodness, to the year of gospel grace, in which redemption was purchased for, and published to, a poor captive world, which is called, *The acceptable year of the Lord.*[u] That was indeed the year of God's goodness, when the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward men appeared so clear, so bright; that was indeed a crowned year, not to mention the crowns of common years, the fruitful fields and flowery meads. Even the glory of that year in which Israel was brought out of Egypt, and received the law from God's mouth, all the glory which crowned the top of Sinai's mount, was not to be compared with the glory of the everlasting gospel, that glory which *excelleth*, that crown of glory, *which fadeth not away.*

But the occasion of the day leads me to apply the text to those fruits and gifts of the divine goodness, with which our land has been crowned this year past, which the house of peers in their address have called, "A WONDERFUL YEAR;" and therefore we may take leave to call it so, who must form our ideas of public affairs very much by the sentiments of those, who are better acquainted than we can be with the particular motions of them, and have a clearer insight into their secret springs and tendencies than it is fit for us to pretend to. I know present things are apt to affect us most, and will allow for that; remembering many a thing, which we called a great and mighty thing when it was in the doing, but it afterwards dwindled, and looked very little: but not undervaluing what God has wrought for us formerly, as if there had never been the like before, nor prejudging what may yet be in the womb of a kind providence, as if we were never to expect the like again, but only giving it its due weight, and what we think it will hold to, it cannot be denied, but that God has of late done great things for us;[v] so *they say among the heathen*, and shall not we say it among ourselves?

Blessed be God for the many testimonies borne this day, by better hearts and better tongues than mine, to the glory of God's goodness; but into the great treasury of the nation's offering, into which the great men cast in of their abundance, we are here out of our poverty to cast in our mite: and the righteous acts of the Lord must be rehearsed at the *places of drawing water*,[w] which were the rendezvous of the meaner sort of people, as well as in the *palaces* of Jacob, where the princes of our people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham.[x] And we trust it shall please the Lord better than hecatombs of drink-offerings and sacrifices.

In this plain and short acknowledgment, let us therefore all join with thankful hearts, *Lord, thou crownest the year*—THIS year *with thy goodness.* Observe,

1. God and his providence must be owned in all the blessings of the year. Whatever has been or is our honour, our joy, our hope, comes from God's hand, and he must have the praise of it. We are very unthinking and unwise if we know not, and very unjust and ungrateful if we own not, that God *gives us our corn, our wine, our oils*,[y] our victories, our wealth, our peace, our all: *Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?*[z] whatever it is we glory in: *Let him that glories, therefore, glory in the Lord.*[a]

It is fit instruments should have their due praise; and the sense the nation has expressed of its obligations to those whom God has honoured in the public service, is a very good indication. It was a sign that Israel remembered not the Lord their God, when they showed not kindness to the house of Gideon;[b] but we must lift up our eyes above the hills, as high as heaven, for from thence cometh our help,[c] and our salvation. It is not from our own sword or bow, but from God's right hand and his arm, that our kingdom is great, our power victorious, and our glory bright; and therefore to him must the kingdom, the power, and the glory, be ascribed. *Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel;* for without him it never had been done, how willingly soever the people offered themselves.[d]

We believe there is a Providence that governs the world, and rules in all the affairs of it; and good men have the comfort of it every day. Even a heathen could say, Ουκ εστι ζην εν τω κοσμω κενω Θεων και κενω προνοιας—*There were no living in this world without God and his providence.* If Providence be our support in the day of our distress, let Providence have our praise in the day of our triumph. It watches us particularly, let us watch it filially; and since every creature is that to us that God makes it to be, let our thanks pass through the instruments to the great Author of all our salvation.

2. The goodness of God must in a particular manner be acknowledged, as that in which all our springs are, and from which all our streams flow. We must take notice, not only of his wisdom and power in effecting things great and admirable in themselves, but his goodness and mercy in doing that which is happy and advantageous for us; and make that the burthen of all our songs, *For he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever;* a short song,

s Ps. lxviii. 24. t Exod. xv. 11. u Luke iv. 19.
v Ps. xxvi. 2, 3. w Judg. v. 11. x Ps. xlvii. 9.
y Hos. ii. 8. z Job xii. 9. a 1 Cor. i. 31.
b Judg. viii. 34, 35. c Ps. cxxi. 1. d Judg. v. 2.

but highly honoured, when it was upon the singing of these words, that the glory of the Lord took possession of Solomon's temple.[e]

When we consider what an unworthy people we are, how ungrateful we have been for God's former favours, and what unsuitable returns we have made, we have reason to admire God's goodness, above all his attributes, in the repetition and progress of his blessings; for he is good to the evil and unthankful. If England's God and Saviour had not been a God of infinite mercy, God and not man, in pardoning sin, we had been ruined long since: but his goodness is his glory, and it is ours; in it, the power of the Lord is great, according as he hath spoken.[f]

Acts of justice to the church's enemies are acts of goodness to her friends. When *he that is mighty doth great things, and scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts*, it is in *remembrance of his mercy*,—and *his mercy* therein *is on them that fear him from generation*[g] *to generation*. O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness! *Lord, thou art good, and dost good*, and thou, therefore, dost good, because thou art good, not for any merit of ours, but for the honour of thy own mercy.

3. These blessings which flow from the goodness of God have crowned this year; he in them has crowned it. That word shall lead us into the detail of those favours, which we are this day to take notice of, with thankfulness, to the glory of God. A crown signifies three things, and each will be of use to us. (1.) It dignifies and adorns. (2.) It surrounds and encloses. And, (3.) It finishes and completes. And accordingly this year has been dignified, surrounded, and finished with the blessings of God's goodness.

(1.) God hath dignified this year with his goodness. A crown denotes honour. Heaven itself, which is perfect holiness in everlasting honour, is often represented by a crown; *a crown of glory which fadeth not away:* and a year of honour this has been to our land; the children that shall be born will call it so.

Surely the English nation never looked greater, nor made a better figure, among the nations than it does at this day. Never did it appear more formidable to its enemies, nor more acceptable to its friends; never were the eyes of Europe more upon its counsels; never was its alliance more courted and valued, nor its influences upon all its confederates more powerful and benign; never was English conduct and English courage more admired, nor our English Jerusalem more a praise in the earth. Would to God our goodness grew in proportion to our greatness; (and that would be both the advancement and security of our greatness;) and that when God, as he promised Israel, *makes us high in praise, and in name, and in honour*, this might be the fruit of it, *that* (as it follows there) *we might be a holy people to the Lord our God;*[h] that while our forces, and those of our allies, are triumphing over the common enemy of Europe abroad, giving us occasion for one thanksgiving-day after another, virtue and serious godliness might triumph—over vice and profaneness, impiety and immorality, those common enemies of mankind—at home; that the pious proclamation of our gracious queen, and her other endeavours for the suppression of vice, and the support of religion, may not be frustrated; that all our other glories may be made substantial, and may be established—to us, and those that shall come after us, by that righteousness which exalteth a nation; and may not be withered by sin, which is a reproach to any people, especially to ours.

Two crowns are at this day the honour of our English nation, and for both we are highly indebted to the divine goodness: The imperial crown of government at home; and the triumphal crown of victory abroad.

[1.] The imperial crown of government at home is our honour and joy, and that by which we have a great deal of reason to value ourselves, and for which we have no less reason to be thankful to God, who because he loved our land,[i] and his thoughts concerning us were thoughts of good, and not of evil, to give us an expected end,[k] set such a government over us.

Which of all the crowns of Europe can pretend to outshine the English diadem at this day, which is as the sun when it goes forth in its strength? The flowers of our crown are not—like his on the other side of the water, who would be called *the king of glory*—gathered out of the spoils of ruined rights and liberties of the subjects, nor stained, like his, with *righteous blood*. The jewels of our crown are not got by fraud and rapine from injured neighbours; not, like his, seized by an unrighteous war, and a deceitful peace, in a bold and impudent defiance of all that is honourable, just, and sacred: no, the flowers and jewels of our crown are *its own* against all the world; none of all our neighbours has any demand upon us. Mercy and truth are the splendour of our crown, and justice and righteousness the never-failing supporters of our throne. The globe and sceptre, that is, the wealth and power, of the English sovereign, are both equitable beyond dispute,—who, therefore, may justly assume that motto, and abide by it, *Je mien tiendrai—I will hold my own.*

How happy, how very happy, is the constitution of our government! such as effectually secures both the just prerogatives of the prince, and the just properties of the subject; so that no good prince can

[e] 2 Chron. v. 13. [f] Numb. xiv. 17. [g] Luke i. 49, 50.

[h] Deut. xxvi. 19. [i] 2 Chron. ix. 1. [k] Jer. xxix. 11.

desire to be greater, nor any good subject desire to be easier, than the constitution of our government provides; for which, we may justly be the envy of all our neighbours; and in which, we ourselves ought to take the greatest satisfaction, sitting down with delight under the shadow of it. If there be any who are *given to change*, I am sure we have no reason to *meddle with them. O my soul, come not thou into their secret.* The ancient landmarks, which our fathers have set, and which the patriots of our own age have confirmed, are so well placed, that in kindness to posterity, as well as in honour to antiquity, we have reason to pray they may never be removed.

Thus bright does the crown of England shine:—yet this is not all the honour of our day. We have further to add, that the head that wears this crown, reflects more honour to it, than it borrows from it. A true Deborah, a mother in Israel, a prudent, careful, tender mother to the Israel of God; one who entirely *seeks the welfare of our people, speaking peace to all their seed;* who is herself a great pattern of virtue and piety, and a pattern of it in her realms; whose conduct is as pure and unexceptionable, as her title is clear and incontestable. It is with very good reason that we do so often in our religious assemblies bless God "for her, and for her wise and good government, and the tranquillity we enjoy under the protection and influences of it."

Far be it from me to *give flattering titles unto man* any where, especially in this place; in so doing *my Maker would soon take me away*;[k] but from a deep conviction of God's goodness to us, and to our land, in the present government, I think it is my duty, as a minister, to stir up myself and you, thankfully to acknowledge it to the glory of our Lord Jesus, the eternal wisdom of the Father, *by whom kings and queens reign, and princes decree justice;* and as the performance of that promise which is made to the gospel church, *Kings shall be her nursing-fathers, and queens her nursing-mothers.* Faithful is he who has promised.

I find it related concerning that holy, good man, Mr. Richard Greenham, who lived and died in the glorious reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, that "He much rejoiced and praised God for the happy government of that princess, and for the blessed calm and peace of God's church and people under it; and spake often of it both publicly and privately, as he was occasioned, and stirred up the hearts of all men what he could, to pray, and to praise God with him for it continually; yea, this matter so affected him, that the day before he died his thoughts were much troubled, for that men were so unthankful for her happy deliverance from the conspiracies of the papists against her." And I am sure we have no less reason to be thankful for the good government we are under, but much more; so far does the copy go beyond the original.

The happiness of the nation in the present ministry, the prudence of our counsellors, the confessed fidelity of those in public trusts, the harmony and good understanding between the queen and the two Houses, and their mutual confidence in each other, and that between the Houses, with the triumphs of catholic charity over bigotry on all sides, ought to be taken notice of by us with all thankfulness, to the glory of that God who has thus crowned us with the blessings of goodness.

And, lastly, the project set on foot for the uniting of the two imperial crowns in one, that England and Scotland, like Judah and Ephraim,[l] may become one stick in the hand of the Lord, which our wise men think will add greatly to the strength, wealth, and honour of this land, is one of the blessings with which this year has been crowned; though the perfecting of it is reserved to be the crown of another year, as we hope the good effects of it will crown the years of many generations, and posterity will for it call this reign blessed.

[2.] The triumphal crown of victory abroad is likewise the honour and joy of our land at this day. What a series of successes has this year been crowned with! and how glorious will the history of it appear in the book of the wars of the Lord, what he did in[m] Flanders, what in Spain, what in Italy! However it shall please God for the future to deal with us, here we must set up our Ebenezer, and say, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.*

It was a clear and glorious victory which opened the campaign in Flanders, when we scarce knew that the armies had taken the field, and which, through the good hand of our God upon us, was well improved. It was a happy turn that was given to our affairs at Barcelona, which if it might have been better improved afterwards, ought not to make us unthankful to God for the good footing then and there gotten. In these and other instances, the righteous God has pleaded our righteous cause, and given judgment for us.

And a righteous cause it is; it is requisite that we be clear in this, that we may make our prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, for its prosperity and success, in faith. Something it may not be improper for me to say to make it out, for the help of those of you who are not capable of getting better information.

Judge therefore within yourselves;

(1.) Is not that a righteous war, which is undertaken for the asserting the rights of injured nations, and the securing of the common interests of Europe? It is in the necessary defence of these that we

[k] Job xxxii. 22.

[l] Ezek. xxxvii. 19.

[m] Numb. xxi. 14.

appear, and act at this day, in conjunction with our allies, against the exorbitant power and boundless ambition of France, which must be reduced, which must be repressed, or we and our neighbours, we and our posterity, cannot be safe.

When proud and haughty men will aim at an universal monarchy, will oblige every sheaf to bow to theirs, will command the territories and treasures of all their neighbours, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth ;[n] it is necessary to the public safety, and is for the honour of God, as King of nations, that a check be given to their rage, *Here shall thy proud waves be stayed*, which by aiming at universal monarchy, threaten an universal deluge. He who, like Ishmael, has his hand against every man, must have every man's hand against him, and can expect no other.

War among the nations, is like the administration of justice in a particular community, it is a revenger to execute wrath upon him who does wrong ;[o] it is a terror to evil-doers, and a protection of right. There are no courts of justice in which an unrighteous king and kingdom may be impleaded, and by whose sentence restitution may be awarded, the injured righted, and wrong-doers punished: the court of Heaven therefore must be appealed to by the drawing of the sword of war, when gentler methods have been tried in vain: for it must be the *ratio ultima regum,—the dernier resort of injured nations.* In this supreme court Jephtha thus lodges his appeal, *The Lord, the Judge, be Judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.*[p] And the final determination of these appeals, no doubt, will be according to equity ; for he who sits in the throne judgeth right: though the righteous cause is not always crowned with victory at first, witness the war between Israel and the Benjamites,[q] yet great is the truth, and will prevail at last. See Job xx. 15.

The expense of blood and treasure must not be grudged, when it is necessary for the settling the balance of power, the securing of the just rights of nations, and the cutting off of those horns with which they have been wounded and scattered.[r]

And the case is very much strengthened, when acts of violence and injustice are maintained by treachery, and a perfidious violation of oaths and leagues ; when the public faith of princes and states is pawned in vain, and the most sacred cords by which conscience should be held, are snapt in sunder like Samson's bonds, only because a man thinks himself a Samson for strength: and this not once or twice, but often, then it is time to draw the sword to avenge the quarrel of the covenant. If a man despise an oath, and break through that, when lo, he hath given his hand, *As I live*, says the Lord, *he shall not escape*, but *it shall surely be recompensed* upon that faithless head.[s] War is an appeal to God's providence, as the Lord of hosts, against those who would not abide by an appeal to his ordinance, as the God of truth.

(ii.) Is not that a righteous war, which is undertaken in defence of the particular interests of our nation? If we had not helped our neighbours to quench the fire in their borders, we know not how soon it might have been kindled in our own bowels, and it might have been out of the power of our hands to extinguish it, and to prevent the ruin of all that is dear to us. It is for our people, and the cities of our God, that we engage in this war ; self-preservation requires it.

How can we be safe, how can we sit still unconcerned, while so formidable a neighbour as France has been, not only harbours, but espouses, the cause, and aims at the establishment, of one who pretends to our crown, sets up a title, and makes an interest against the best of governments, and manifestly designs the ruin of our religion, rights, and liberties, and all we have that is valuable? How can we do otherwise, who must write after a *French copy*, and be governed by *French counsels?*

Did the wisdom of the nation find it requisite to oblige us, by an oath, not only to be faithful to the present government, but to maintain the succession as it is established in the protestant line ; (which we pray God late to bring in, but long to continue, that it may prove a successful expedient, for the extinguishing of the hopes of our popish adversaries, and all their aiders and abettors ;) and is it not the duty, as well as interest, of the nation, in pursuance to that engagement, to take all possible precaution for the fortifying our bulwarks against every attempt upon that establishment? There is no man that has sincerely abjured the Pretender, but he must in good earnest pray against his supporters.

Well! this is the cause, the just and honourable cause, in which our banner is displayed ; for the prosperity of which we have often prayed ; and in the good success of which we are this day rejoicing, as that which is very much the honour of *this* year. If in any places which we are concerned for, there have been some losses, and disappointments,—or advances not so quick as we were apt to promise ourselves,—those need not surprise or perplex us: in general, the progress of our arms has been very considerable, beyond what we could reasonably have expected, and likely to turn greatly to our advantage.

2. God has *surrounded* this year with his goodness, *compassed and enclosed it* on every side. So we translate the same word, (Ps. v. 12.) *With favour wilt thou compass* (or crown) *him as with a shield.* He has

[n] Isa. v. 8. [o] Rom. xiii. 4. [p] Judg. xi. 27. [q] Judg. xx. [r] Zech. i. 21. [s] Ezek. xvii. 18, 19.

given us instances of his goodness in every thing that concerns us; so that turn which way we will, we meet with the tokens of his favour; every part of the year has been enriched with the blessings of heaven, and no gap has been left open for any desolating judgment to enter by. A hedge of protection and peculiar enclosure has been made about us on every side, and has been to us as the crown to the head; so entirely have we been begirt by it, and *comforted on every side.*[t]

Let us observe some instances of that goodness which has *gone through* the year.

(1.) It has been a year of peace and tranquillity at home, even while we have been engaged in war abroad; as, thanks be to God, the years past have been. The God of peace makes peace in our borders;[u] securing us from foreign invasions *upon* our borders, and domestic insurrections *within* our borders; and blessing the care of those, who under him are the conservators of our peace. We ought to be so much the more sensible of this mercy, and thankful for it, because so many other countries in Europe are at this time the seat of war. When we read in the public intelligences of the ruin of cities by long sieges, the putting of all to the sword, and the devastations made in those countries where armies are encamped, let us take occasion to bless God that it is not so in our land. We hear, indeed, of wars, and rumours of wars, in other countries; but at so great a distance, that they create no horror or inconvenience to us. What a consternation was the prophet Jeremiah himself put into by the noise of war? *My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.*[v] Thanks be to God, we are not acquainted with those frights, we see not those desolations of fire and sword, we hear not the thundering noise of the instruments of war, that breathe threatenings and slaughter.* How pleasant is the noise of yonder great guns, now they are proclaiming our victories, and celebrating our triumphs, and as it were discharging war out of our kingdom! But how dreadful would it be, how would it make our ears to tingle, and our hearts to tremble, if the noise came from the batteries of an enemy, and every shot carried with it a messenger of death flying swiftly!

The peace we enjoy is the comfort of our lives, the security of our estates, and the protection both of the civil and sacred adminstrations. War is an interruption to the course of justice, and a disturbance to its courts, an obstruction to the progress of the word of God, and a terror to religious assemblies: but, blessed be God, both are held among us *without fear*; on *all our glory* this is a defence;[w] and this makes our English Jerusalem a quiet habitation, and the cities of our solemnities doubly pleasant to us.[x] To this we owe it, that the highways are not unoccupied, that the plains are not deserted, and that our cities remain in their strength. We are *delivered from the noise of archers, at the places of drawing water: here, therefore, let us rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even his righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages in Israel.*[y]

Thanks be to God, it is with us at this day, as it was with Judah and Israel in Solomon's time, when they dwelt safely, every man under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree,[z] and the property of them not questioned or invaded; what we have we can call our own; and the enjoyment of them not disturbed or imbittered to us. God grant, that security and sensuality may not be the *ill* effects of so *good* a cause, as our long peace and tranquillity!

(2.) It has been a year of plenty, and abundance of the increase of the earth. Though we of this country were threatened, and somewhat incommoded, by unseasonable and excessive rains in the time of harvest, (and it has been observed, that our land, unlike to Canaan, is in danger of suffering by too much rain more than by too little,) yet in wrath God remembered mercy, and our corn was not *taken away*, as it might have been, *in the season thereof*; but our markets are full, and a kind Providence does abundantly bless our provisions, and satisfies our poor with bread,[a] if any thing will satisfy them. It is a pity this should be complained of as a grievance by the seller, which is so great a blessing to the buyer; and that some expedient or other is not found out, in imitation of Joseph's prudence, to keep the balance somewhat even between them; that he who sells his corn, may neither have cause to complain of plenty, nor he who buys the bread, of scarcity.

Whatever complaints bad hearts may make of bad times, the scarcity of money, and the burthen of taxes, and the like; those who know the world better than I do, observe, "that whatever there are in France, in England there are no visible marks of poverty; nor any sign to be seen, either in building or furniture, either in food or clothing, no, nor in the alehouse or the tavern, (where, one would think, money, if scarce, should first be spared,) of the decay of our trade, and the expense of the war being insupportable."

(3.) It should seem to have been a year too of more trade than one would have expected, considering the war. Numerous fleets of merchantmen are come in, and our surrounding ocean is not only as a strong wall to us, but as a rich mine; so that, with Zebulun, we *suck of the abundance of the seas, and of*

[t] Ps. lxxi. 21. [u] Ps. cxlvii. 14. [v] Jer. iv. 19.

* Just as these words were spoken, it happened that the cannon of the castle began to be discharged in honour of the day, within hearing of our assembly, which occasioned the following remark.

[w] Isa. iv. 5. [x] Isa. xxxiii. 20. [y] Judg. v. 11. [z] 1 Kings iv. 25. [a] Ps. cxxxii. 15.

*treasures hid in the sand.*[b] If it be complained of that we lose more ships of trade to the enemy than they to us, it must be considered, that suppose the matter of fact be so, the reason is because we have more to lose, abundantly more, and more valuable.

May our merchandise, and our hire, be holiness to the Lord,[c] that a blessing may rest upon it, as it will if we consecrate our gain unto the Lord, and our substance to the Lord of the whole earth.[d]

(4.) It has been a year of constant opportunities for our souls, and plenty of the means of grace. This, this is that which crowns the year with God's goodness more than any thing. The greatest honour of our land is, that God's tabernacle is among us, the Lord is known, his name is great. This makes it *beautiful for situation*, and *the joy of the whole earth*, and to us whose lot is cast in it, a *pleasant land* indeed: that we are a Christian nation, a protestant nation; That we have plenty of Bibles in a language we understand, and not only that we may read them without danger of the inquisition, but that we have them read to us, have stewards of God's house among us, to break to us this bread of life. *Our eyes see our teachers*, and they are not *removed into corners;* and the word of the Lord is not, *in respect of scarcity*, precious in our days; but we have *open vision*. God makes known his statutes and judgments to us, and has not dealt so with other nations. Our fleece is wet with the dew of heaven, while theirs is dry. It is our religion that is our glory; it is the fear of the Lord that is our treasure; it is God himself that is our crown and diadem of beauty.[e]

The sabbaths of the year are the crown of it. The Jews called the sabbath their *Queen:* and the crown of our sabbaths is our solemn assemblies, which we have had the comfort of throughout the year, throughout the land, without interruption, in the stated times appointed for them; it is that we have Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, *read in our synagogues* every sabbath day.[f] It is a comfort to us, when we come together to worship God, that we do it not only in the fear of God, and in the faith of Christ, but *in a spiritual communion*, with *all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours;* that we worship the same God, in the same name, by the same rule of the written word, under the conduct of the same spirit, and in expectation of the same blessed hope. But our communion with the religious assemblies of our own land, both those by the legal establishment, and those by the legal toleration, is, in a particular manner, comfortable to us. Our brethren's services to God and his church who move in a higher and larger sphere, we rejoice in, and heartily wish well to; and think we have a great deal of reason to be thankful also, both to God and the government, for the continuance of our own liberties and opportunities, which we desire always to be found quiet and peaceable, humble and charitable, in the use of, and diligent and faithful in the improvement of, for the glorifying of God, and the working out of our own salvation.

Thus has the year been surrounded with the fruits of God's goodness, and we have been compassed with songs of deliverance. In consideration whereof, let us be constant and universal in our obedience to God, *steady and uniform* in our returns of duty to him, whose compassions to us *are so*, and *never fail.*

3. God has crowned, that is, he hath finished, this year with his goodness. The happy issue of an affair we call the crown of it; and the close of this year's actions may well be looked upon as the beauty of the whole year, the crown of the whole work; of which his favour has both laid the foundation, and brought forth the top-stone with shouting.

In the beginning of the year, God did remarkably precede us with the blessing of his goodness;[g] met us with a victory early in the morning of the campaign, before we were well awake, which left room for the doing of a good day's work in prosecution of it. Yet we rendered not according to the benefit done unto us; for which he might justly have turned his hand against us, and have made the latter end of the year, by some fatal disgrace or disappointment, to have undone what had been done so gloriously in the beginning of the year, so that we might have been obliged to conclude the year with a fast: but he has not *dealt with us according to our sins;* the same powerful and gracious hand that went before us then, crowns us now with honour and joy; the end of the year is of a piece with the beginning; and, in answer to our prayers on the last thanksgiving day, he has favoured us with *another* feast and a good day, in which we have light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. Thus is God known by his name Jehovah, a finishing God, a Rock whose work is perfect; and thus are we admonished, when we have begun in the spirit, not to end in the flesh.

Two things crown this year, and make the conclusion of it great; and both must be attributed to the goodness of God:

(1.) The successes of our allies abroad; the wonderful relief of Turin, and the restoration of that excluded prince to his capital, when his affairs were reduced to the last extremity, and the enemy was confident of carrying the day. And that this should be but one day's work, but two or three hours' action. This is such a loss and mortification to our adversaries, and the consequences of it, in Italy, of such

[b] Deut. xxxiii. 19. [c] Isa. xxiii. 18. [d] Mic. iv. 13. [e] Isa. xxviii. 5 [f] Acts xiii. 27. [g] Ps. xxi. 3.

vast advantage to our allies, and likely to be more so; that the year must be acknowledged to end as honourably and happily as it began. *This is the Lord's doing!*

That which magnified the mercy in the beginning of the year, was, that our expectations were in it anticipated; that which magnifies this in the end of the year, is, that our expectations in it were far outdone. In that, God was better to us than our hopes; in this, than our fears; in both, than our deserts.

(2.) The unanimity of our counsels at home. The presence of God is as much to be observed and owned *in the congregation of the mighty, and judging among the gods*,[h] as in the high places of the field, determining the issues of war, and turning the hovering scale of victory. It is he who gives a spirit of judgment to them who sit in council, as well as *strength to them that turn the battle to the gate*:[i] and in this matter, he who has all hearts in his hands, who made man's mouth, the hearing ear and the seeing eye, has done well for us, and crowned the year.

All who undertake to give the sense of the nation, or of any part of it, the lords, the commons, the convocation, all agree to admire the present happy posture of our affairs, and the flourishing state of the kingdom under this government, and in this conjuncture. Never did the English nation appear to be so universally easy, so pleased, so entirely satisfied in the public management and administration. *Happy art thou*, O England, *who is like unto thee, O people?* Never was such a hearty zeal discovered for the common cause of our religion and liberties, against the threatening power of France; nor were ever the necessary supports of that cause given so speedily, so cheerfully, and with such expressions of a willingness to continue them, till it be in our power to oblige that perfidious foe to such a just and honourable peace, as it shall not be in his power to violate. In a word, the temper and good affection of the nation at this day, seems not unlike that of the people of Israel, when Solomon dismissed them from the feast of dedication, *They blessed the king, and went unto their tents, joyful and glad of heart, for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people*, 1 Kings viii. 66. Long—and ever—may it be so!

Ministers (I know) are the unfittest persons, and the pulpit the unfittest place, in the world, to talk of state affairs in. You know it is not my practice; and I am sure I am most in my element when I am preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified. But I would endeavour to do the work of every day in its day, according as the duty of the day requires; and on such occasions as these, one had as good say nothing, as nothing to the purpose; and therefore, though I am not so well versed in the public affairs as to be particular in my remarks, nor such a master of language as to be fine in them; yet the hints I have given you of God's favours to our land at this day, and the great goodness with which the year we are now concluding has been crowned, will serve to answer in some measure my intention, (and it is no other than what becomes a minister of the gospel,) which is, to excite your thankfulness to so good a God, and to confirm your affections to, and satisfaction in, so good a government: and therefore, I hope, you will neither think them impertinent, nor find them altogether unprofitable.

### III. Application.

That which remains, is to make some improvement of our observations concerning that goodness with which God has crowned this year, that we may go away (as we should aim to do from every sermon) some way wiser and better.

1. Has God thus crowned the year? Let us cast all the crowns of it at his feet, by our humble, grateful acknowledgments of his infinite wisdom, power, and mercy. What we have the joy of, let God have the praise of. The blessed spirits above cast their crowns before the throne,[k] and that is the fittest place for all our crowns. Let praise continue to wait on him, who, though he be attended with the praises of angels, yet is pleased to inhabit the praises of Israel.[l] Let our closets and families witness to our constant pious adorations of the divine greatness, and devout acknowledgments of the divine goodness to us, and to our land; that every day may be with us a thanksgiving day, and we may live a life of praise, that work of heaven. David did so, *Every day will I bless thee*;[m] nay, almost every hour in the day, *Seven times a day will I praise thee*.[n]

God must have the glory, particularly of all our victories; and every monument of them must be sacred to the Eternal Lord, rather than to *the eternal memory of any man*: nor ought the most meritorious and distinguished actions of the greatest heroes to be registered, without some acknowledgment to that supreme *Numen—Deity*, whose universal and overruling providence, guided their eyes, strengthened their arms, and covered their heads. *All people will thus walk in the name of their God*,[o] and shall not we? If Amalek be subdued, the memorial of it is an altar, not a triumphal arch; and is inscribed to the honour not of Moses or Joshua, but of God himself, *Jehovah nissi—The Lord my banner*.

In this, both our illustrious sovereign, and her great general, are examples to the nation; (and, as much as in other things, do real honour to it by doing honour to the religion of it;) That from him in the

h Ps. lxxxii. 1. i Isa. xxviii. 6. k Rev. iv. 10. l Ps. xxiii. 3. m Ps. cxlv. 2. n Ps. cxix. 164. o Mic. iv. 5.

camp, immediately upon the obtaining of a victory, and from her in the church, in due time after, and from both, in the most solemn manner, the incense of praise ascends to the glory of God, as the God of our salvation. These, who thus honour God, no doubt, he will yet further honour; and make those crowns, those coronets, to shine yet more bright, which are thus laid at his feet, with *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory.*

If we be remiss to ascribe the praise of our achievements to God, we provoke him to turn his hand against us, and by some judgment or other to distrain for the rent which is not duly paid. When Samson had with the jaw-bone of an ass laid a thousand Philistines dead upon the spot, he seems to take the praise of the performance too much to himself, and to overlook the arm that strengthened him, when he called the place *Ramath-lehi—the lifting up of the jaw-bone;*[p] and, therefore—by a very afflictive thirst which seized him immediately after, and drove him to his prayers—God reduced his pride, and made him know his own weakness, and dependence upon God, and obliged him to give a new name to the place, *Enhakkore—the well of him that cried,*[q] not of him that *conquered.* The more thankful we are for former mercies, the better prepared we are for further mercies.

2. Has God thus crowned the year? Let not us then profane our crown, nor lay our honour in the dust, by our unworthy walking. Let the goodness of God lead us to repentance, and engage us all to reform our lives and families, to be more watchful against sin, and to abound more in the service of God, and in every thing that is virtuous and praiseworthy. Then, and then only, we offer praise, so as indeed to glorify God, when we order our conversation aright; and then shall we be sure to see his great salvation, and be for ever praising him.

It does indeed give both a damp to our joy, and a shock to our hopes, at this day, that notwithstanding the great things God has done for us there is yet so much wickedness to be found among us; so much impiety, so much immorality; and both arising from practical atheism and infidelity, and accompanied with a contempt of religion and sacred things. What shall we say to these things? It is some encouragement to us to hear, as we do by some, that through the pious care of the general, there is a manifest reformation of manners in the army; vice discountenanced, and virtue in reputation; God grant it may be more and more so! it would be the happiest omen of any other. It is likewise to be rejoiced in, that there are national testimonies borne against vice and profaneness, and national endeavours used for the suppressing of it; which we heartily pray God both to give success to, and graciously to accept of, that the wickedness which is not *prevented,* yet may not be laid to the charge of the land, nor bring judgments upon the community.

But it is our duty to lament *the wickedness of the wicked;* to sigh and cry for the abominations that are found among us; to witness against them in our places; and, so, to *keep ourselves pure* from them, and to do our utmost by our prayers and endeavours to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end. And thus we may prevent the mischief of it to the nation, and empty the measure which others are filling, that there may be a *lengthening out of our tranquillity.*

Now we are reviewing with thankfulness the mercies of the year past, let us at the same time reflect with sorrow and shame upon the sins of the year past; our own sins, I mean, for it is enough for us to judge ourselves. The year has been full of goodness on God's part, but very empty on ours. He has not been as a barren wilderness to us, or as waters that fail; but we have been so to him, very careless and defective in our duty, and in many instances we have come short.

Our time has been mispent, our opportunities not improved; God has come this year *seeking fruit* among us, but how little has he found! God brings our years to an end, as a HISTORY THAT IS WRITTEN, so substantial and valuable are the gifts of his favour to us; but we bring our years to an end as a tale that is told,[r] so idle, and trifling, and insignificant are we in our carriage toward him.

4. Let God's goodness to us engage, and increase, our goodness to one another: it is justly expected, that they who obtain mercy should show mercy, and so reflect the rays of the divine goodness upon all about them; being herein *followers of God as dear children;*[s] *followers of him that is good,*[t] in his goodness.

Let God's goodness to us constrain us, as we have opportunity, to do good to all men; to do good with what we have in the world, as faithful stewards of the manifold grace of God; (charity must crown a thanksgiving day;) to do good with all the abilities God gives us, remembering that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

Let it particularly incline us to do good to those from whose sentiments ours differ in the less weighty matters of the law. This I would take all occasions to press upon myself and others, pursuant to the great royal law of charity. There is an infinite distance between God and us, and a just controversy he has with us, and yet he is kind to us, and does us good; and cannot we then be kind to one another, and do all good offices one to another, notwithstanding the matters in variance between us? How ill does it become us to bear a grudge to any of the

p Judg. xv. 17. q Judg. xv. 19.

r Ps. xc. 9. s Eph. v. 1. t 1 Pet. iii. 13.

children of our people, or wish ill to any, who are every day and every year crowned with the goodness of God, and are, and hope to be, forgiven of him! Let not our eye be evil one toward another, when God's eye is so good toward us all, and he does things for us, which we all come in for a share of the benefit of, and are all this day giving thanks for. Let our common success against our enemies abroad, help to stay all enmities at home; and let all our consciences be able to witness for us, that we *walk in love*, and *keep the unity of the spirit*.

4. *et ult.* Let this year's experience help to support and encourage next year's expectations. Has God crowned us with his goodness this year? let us thence infer, that if we approve ourselves faithful to God, surely goodness and mercy shall still follow us. And our hopes ought to be the matter of our praises as well as our joys. *Unto thee do we give thanks*, (says the Psalmist,) *unto thee do we give thanks; for that thy name is near, thy wondrous works declare.*[a] The wondrous works we are this day giving thanks for, are upon this account the more valuable, that they give us ground to hope, that *God's name is near*, —the advancement of his kingdom,—and, in that, the accomplishment of his promise. That comprehensive prayer, *Father, glorify thy name*, has already obtained an answer from heaven,—which true believers may apply to themselves,—*I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it again.*[v] Amen, so be it. Hallelujah.

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# ENGLAND'S HOPES;

# A SERMON.

PREACHED

JANUARY THE FIRST, 1706-7.

ISAIAH lxiii. 4.

*The year of my redeemed is come.*

A NEW year is now come. The common compliment of the morning is, "I wish you a good new year;" and it is well; hearty well-wishers we ought to be to the welfare one of another. God by his grace make us all wiser and better, and give us to live better every year; better this year than we did the last,—and then it will be indeed a good new year. Good hearts will make good times and good years.

Have any of you had any good purposes and resolutions in your minds, the prosecution whereof has hitherto been delayed? put it off no longer. Is the house of God yet to be set up in your hearts, the work to be begun? begin it to-day; as Moses did, who, on the first day of the first month, set up the tabernacle.[a] Are there things amiss with you to be amended, corruptions to be purged out, and things wanting to be set in order? begin this day to reform; as Hezekiah did, who, on the first day of the first month, began to sanctify the house of the Lord:[b] so will you make this day in the best manner remarkable, and this year comfortable.

But that which at present I aim at, is to direct you —in wishing a good year—to the church of God, and the kingdom of Christ in the world; and, particularly, to the land of our nativity; to the prosperity of which, in all its interests, I hope every one of us bears a very hearty good-will, that in the peace thereof we may have peace. *For we are members one of another.*

My text would easily lead me to *foretell* a good year: but I am no prophet, nor prophet's son, nor dare I ever pretend to prediction; nor indeed, can I give heed to any other but the most sure word of prophecy in the written word, which is a light shining in a dark place.[c] Christ's parting words to his disciples at his ascension, is sufficient to silence all bold inquiries, and much more all presumptuous determinations, concerning future events; *it is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.*[d] Astrological predictions I utterly condemn; I hope you know better things than to have any regard to them. The prophet Isaiah speaks of the astrologers, the star-gazers, and the monthly prognosticators, in his time, as great cheats, that imposed upon the world. *The heavens declare the glory of God;*[e] and magnify the το γνωστον τυ Θευ,—*that which* IS, and MAY BE, *known of God;* but were never intended to declare the will of God,[f] or any of those *secret things* which *belong not to us.*[g] Scripture prophecies I have a profound veneration for, and of admirable use they are to give us a general idea of the methods of Providence concerning the church, and to furnish us with a key to many of the difficulties of it, and thereby to assist our faith and hope in the worst of times. But the particular intention and application of them, till the event unfolds them, though I greatly value the labours of those who searched into them, yet to me it seems *higher than heaven, what can we do? deeper than hell, what can we know?* It is what we cannot *by searching find out to perfection*, or to satisfaction.

My design therefore, in the choice of this text today, is not to gratify your curiosity with prognostications of what *shall be;* but to direct your prayers for the church of God, and to offer something for the assistance of your faith in those prayers. *For we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.* I

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[a] Ps. lxxv. 1. [v] John xii. 28.
[a] Exod. xl. 2. [b] 2 Chron. xxix. 17.
[c] 2 Pet. i. 19. [d] Acts i. 7. [e] Ps. xix. 1.
[f] Rom. i. 19 [g] Deut. xxix. 29.

remember the rule long since given me, with reference to the prospects of public affairs, and shall still abide by it, "Pray, pray; and do not prophesy." We may be sure of an answer to the prayers of faith, but not of the accomplishment of the predictions of fancy.

Our Lord Jesus has taught us to pray: *Our Father who art in heaven! thy kingdom come.* And it is fit we should take our instructions in prayer from him, on whose intercession we depend for the success of our prayers. Now when we pray, *Father, let thy kingdom come*, this is one thing included in it, and intended by it, *Father, let the year of the redeemed come.* Let this therefore be our heart's desire, and our prayer to our heavenly Father, every day.

My text is part of that account which the victorious Redeemer gives of his glorious appearances against his and his church's enemies, represented by the Edomites, whom he *treads down in his anger*, and *tramples upon in his fury*;[h] and, therein, appears *more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*[i] Come, and with an eye of faith see the Lord Jesus, by his grace, triumphing—over sin and corruption, and all the powers of Satan—in the souls of believers, under whose feet he will shortly tread that great enemy,[k] and make him *their* footstool,[l] as he has made them *his own.* Come, and see him, by his providence, triumphing over all antichristian powers and factions in the world; and all the maintainers and upholders of the devil's kingdom; Pagan formerly, and Mahometan and papal now: putting down all oppressing rule, principality, and power, till he has completed his whole undertaking. And upon the sight of this, let every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And if you ask, why Michael and his angels push on this war so vigorously, and at such a vast expense of blood and treasure? Michael himself shall answer you in the text, *The year of my redeemed is come*; even the day appointed of the Father for this great performance; that day at which, as Mr. Norris expresses it in his paraphrase on this passage, "Fate folded down the iron leaf." Now the day prefixed is come, the work designed must be done, whatever it costs: *The Lord shall arise and have mercy upon Sion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.*[m]

Let us observe here,

1. That the church and people of God are Christ's redeemed,—*the ransomed of the Lord*; so they are called in the promise, Isa. xxxv. 10.—*the redeemed of the Lord*; so they are called upon to praise him, Ps. cvii. 2. They are his own; *he* is *entitled* to *them*, as his own; and as his own, *they* are *very dear* to *him.* He formed them for himself. He bought them for himself, and paid dear for them; shed his blood, his precious blood, to purchase them, and purify them to himself; gave his life, an invaluable price, a ransom for them. They were sold by the guilt of sin, to the justice of God; had sold themselves, by their affection to it, unto the dominion of Satan; but out of both these bonds Christ has effectually provided for their discharge and deliverance.

He calls them, here, *his redeemed*—though as yet their redemption was not wrought out, and obtained, by the bringing in of the everlasting righteousness—because he had undertaken to redeem them, and the work would as surely be effected, in the fulness of time, as if it were done already. Thus, when the gospel was first preached in Corinth, and but few of that place were effectually called, yet Christ said, *I have much people in this city.*[n] They are mine already; for *the Lord knoweth them that are his*, and will lose none of them.

It is the honour of good people that they belong to Christ:[o] they are his, and shall be owned as his in that day when he makes up his jewels; but they have no reason to be proud of this honour, for, by this, boasting is for ever excluded; That they had not been his, if he had not bought them: they must be redeemed ere they could be preferred. Where is boasting then? We are bought, and therefore still bound; bought with a price, and therefore must not be our own, but his who bought us; to him we must live, and not to ourselves.

2. That there is a time fixed, concerning them, which is the year of the redeemed; when their Redeemer will do great things for them. A year which shall introduce a bright and glorious scene; which shall be crowned with their salvation. A year of jubilee to them, (to which it seems to allude,) when they shall be discharged from their servitude, and restored to the *glorious liberty* and inheritance *of the children of God*; which will be indeed to them *the acceptable year of the Lord.*

This is fixed, in the council and decree of God; which he has *purposed in himself*; and in which he has *determined all the times before appointed*; particularly the times concerning his church, which is his garden enclosed, his Segullah, his peculiar treasure in the world, about which his providence, through all the revolutions of time, is in a special manner conversant; and therefore his purposes from eternity were so. The affairs of the church were not left to the disposal of blind chance. The wheels on which it moves are animated by *the spirit of the living creature*;[p] and there are *eyes in the wheels*, a wise providence that directs all for the best, according to the divine will, and the settled counsels of that will. The Eternal Mind never makes a transition to *new measures*, never takes up *new resolves*; *known unto God are all his works*, and all ours too.

h Deut. xxix. 3
k Rom. xvi. 2.
i Ps. lxxvi. 4.
l Ps. cx. 1.
m Ps. cii. 13.
o Mark ix. 41.
n Acts xviii. 10.
p Ezek. i. 20.

the events themselves, and the times of them, *from the beginning of the world.* Which yields an unspeakable satisfaction to all those who have but so much reason and religion as to believe, that God knows what is fit to be done, and when, better than we do, and that his time is, without doubt, the best time.

The providences of God concerning Israel of old, as well as their ordinances, were typical; and *things happened to them for ensamples* or patterns of the great salvation to be wrought in and for the gospel-church. Many a time was Israel afflicted, from their youth up; many a time in the house of bondage; but still there was a year fixed for their redemption, when their warfare or appointed time should be accomplished,[q] and deliverance should be wrought for them. The year was fixed for their redemption out of Egypt; and God kept time to a day; *At the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day,* they went out triumphantly.[r] The year was likewise fixed for their return out of their captivity in Babylon; when seventy years were accomplished in the desolations of Jerusalem.[s] And the distresses of the New-Testament church are in like manner limited to *a time, times, and half a time;* which, if we know not how to compute with any certainty or exactness, yet, we may with the greatest assurance infer from it, that Infinite Wisdom has fixed the time, though it is not for us to know it. *Times are not hidden from the Almighty,* though *they that know him do not* as yet *see his day,*[t] nor foresee it.

3. That the year of the redeemed *will* come; though it may be long first, long wished for, long waited for, yet it will come at last. Concerning the thing itself, we may be clear, we may be confident, though concerning the time we may be in doubt, and in the dark. Though many years intervene between this, and the year of the redeemed, and those, perhaps, dark, and cloudy, and melancholy years, years in which we see evil,[u] yet the days of affliction and captivity will be numbered and finished, and the years of servitude will come to an end; hitherto it shall come, but no further; so long it shall last, but no longer. God will *have mercy on Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, though he* has had *indignation against them threescore and ten years;*[v] and he will *make them glad* with the joys of his salvation, in some proportion to the *days wherein he has afflicted them.*

Observe with what an air of triumph and exaltation the Redeemer himself here speaks of this great day; as one who longed to engage the enemy, and rescue the beloved of his soul, and who almost grew impatient of the delay. He cannot anticipate the time. The divine counsels are as mountains of brass,[w] which can neither move nor moulder; but when the wheels of his chariot, which have been so long in coming, arrive at last, how welcome are they! Now *the year of my redeemed is come; it is come.* And, *Lo, I come.* With this *shout* does *the Lord himself descend from heaven, ride upon the wings of the wind,*[x] and make the *mountains flow at his presence.*[y] With this does the Lord awake himself *as one out of sleep,* and like a *mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine;*[z] *The year of my redeemer is come.* Now, χρονος ουκ εσται ετι—*Time,* that is, delay, *shall be no longer.*[a] Now will I arise; now shall the everlasting arm be made bare. *Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh.*

Now for the more distinct improvement of this, let me apply it, both to the universal church of the redeemed, the whole family, in every age; and to particular churches, and the interests of the kingdom of Christ, in some special time and place.

(1.) Let me briefly apply it to the whole mystical body of Christ, the universal church of the redeemed; in which we have cast our lot; and hope to have a place and a name in the general assembly of all who belong to it. And understanding it of this, there are two which above all the rest may be called the years of the redeemed; one long since past, the other yet to come.

[1.] The year of Christ's dying was the great year of the redeemed, and that on which all the rest depend; from the salvation then wrought, the foundation was laid on which all the other more particular salvations of the church are built. Therefore, in the Apocalypse, the Lamb that was to *make war with the beast,* and to *overcome him,* appeared as a Lamb *that had been slain.*[b] And it is *by the blood of the Lamb* that the victory is said to be obtained.[c] And many understand the text of *that* year of the redeemed, when Christ by *death destroyed him who had the power of death;* trod the winepress of his Father's wrath alone, and *stained all his raiment,* both with his own blood, and with the blood of his enemies.

Then was the price paid down; upon the undertaking of which, the great Redeemer was trusted with the salvation of all the Old-Testament saints; and for which all who in every age believe in him should be justified and accepted. Then the chosen remnant was purchased, and eternal life purchased for them; then principalities and powers were spoiled, and a show made of them openly;[d] the strong man armed disarmed, stript, and triumphed over. To that victory all the victories of faith are owing; for we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

The time was fixed for this great and glorious

q Isa. xl. 2. r Exod. xii. 41. s Dan. ix. 2.
t Job xxiv. 1. u Ps. xc. 15.
v Zech. i. 12. w Zech. vi. 1.
x Ps. xviii. 9, 10. y Isa. lxiv. 3. z Ps. lxxviii. 65.
a Rev. x. 6. b Rev. v. 6.
c Rev. xii. 11. d Col. ii. 15.

achievement; fixed in that determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, by which that sacrifice was *delivered up*; fixed in the Old-Testament predictions, from that of the "*Seed of the woman*, which should *break the serpent's head*,[e]" to that of "Messiah the Prince, who at the period of the seventy weeks should *finish transgression, and make an end of sin, by making reconciliation for iniquity*, and *bringing in an everlasting righteousness.*"[f] It was fixed to a day, it was fixed to an hour: how often did Christ speak of it with that exactness: *Mine hour is not yet come*, and when it was come, *This is your hour.*

Long was it looked for by them who *waited for the redemption*;[g] and more earnestly by him that was to *work out* the redemption, who, having this baptism to be baptized with, was even *straitened till it was accomplished.*[h] It came at last: *Blessed is he that cometh.* And of all the years that God has crowned with his goodness, that was, without doubt, the greatest of all that every day and night measured since the clock of time was set in motion. And though they who were to have the benefit of the redemption slumbered and slept, and were not duly sensible of the vast importance of what was then doing till afterwards, when the Spirit was poured out upon them, yet he that was to be at the expense of it, and foresaw how the great affair of man's redemption—and, perhaps, the angel's confirmation—was to turn upon that mighty hinge, triumphed and was transported, when he said in the beginning of the battle, *Now is my soul troubled*, but *now is the judgment of this world; now is the prince of this world cast out*;[i] and in the close of the battle, when he knew what an irreparable blow he had given to the devil's kingdom, *It is finished.*[k] This was that *year of the redeemed* which we frequently celebrate the memorial of with joy, at the table of the Lord.

[2.] The year of Christ's second coming to judge the world, is that *great year of the redeemed* which is yet to come; that true Platonic year, which will be, though not the repetition, yet the review and retribution, of all that is past. And as in our observance of the great institution of the Eucharist, that *proprium—appropriate rite*, of our holy religion, and peculiar badge of our Christianity, we look *as far back* as that year of the redeemed which is past, showing forth the Lord's death; so we look *as far forward* as that year of the redeemed which we are yet in expectation of, showing it forth *till he come.*

This year of the redeemed, which will be crowned with the *greatness* of God, as other years have been *with his goodness*, is fixed in the divine counsels; unalterably fixed, fixed to a day; for *he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness*;[l] and a great and terrible day it will be. God, by his grace, make us all ready for it, that he who shall then appear may appear to our joy. It is fixed, but it is not revealed; it is not fit it should, nor agreeable to that state of probation and expectation we are now in. It is fixed, and it will come, it will certainly come, to the unspeakable confusion of all those who slight the warnings of it, and the everlasting consolation of all those who embrace the promise of it. As sure as this year *is* come, that year *will* come, and you and I shall see it; *in our flesh* resumed *we shall see it*; shall see the terrors, shall see the triumphs, of that day, and, according as we are found then, shall certainly and eternally share either in the one or in the other.

That, that will be the year of the redeemed; in which all our hopes and prospects, which in our present state are still kept moving forward, one event serving only to raise our expectation of the next, will come to a full period. Then we shall see the final end of all those things, which here we are so solicitous and inquisitive about.[m] And a blessed end it will certainly be to all the redeemed of the Lord; who will in that day lift up their heads and hearts with joy, never to despond or be dejected again, knowing that their redemption in its open declaration, and full perfection, draweth nigh.[n]

All the redeemed who are now scattered and dispersed over the face of the whole earth, will then be gathered together into one body; and a great and glorious body it will be; to be presented to the Father *without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing*; and to grace their Redeemer's triumphs, as the trophies of his victory over the powers of darkness, that had held them captive, that he may be *glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.*[o] A general rendezvous it will be of all that ever approved themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ, when the Captain of our salvation[p] shall produce all who were given him; they shall every one answer to their names, and not one be missing.

All the enemies of the redeemed will then be conquered and brought down, and death itself, that last enemy, shall be destroyed, and swallowed up in victory. The devil, with all those whom he has decoyed into his interest, will then, by the almighty power of that God, *whose the deceived and the deceiver are*,[q] be *cast into the lake of fire*,[r] and the redeemed will be set for ever out of the reach of all their enemies. Then shall the redemption of the soul be perfected, in the redemption of the body from the power of the grave, and *that* captivity led captive.[s]

But that which, above all, will denominate it the year of the redeemed, is, that then *the ransomed of*

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e Gen. iii. 15. f Dan. ix. 24. g Luke ii. 38. h Luke xii. 50. i John xii. 27. k John xii. 31. l Acts xvii. 31.

m Dan. xii. 8. n Luke xxi. 28. o 2 Thess. i. 10. p Heb. ii. 10. q Job xii. 16. r Rev. xx. 10. s Rom. viii. 23.

*the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs of praise; everlasting joy* shall fill their hearts, and crown their heads; and sorrow and sighing, those clouds which in this world are still returning after the rain, shall be finally dismissed, and flee away for ever.[t] The redeemed of the Lord, by virtue of their union with the Redeemer, will then sit down with him upon his throne, as he overcame, and is set down with his Father upon his throne, and reign with him for ever.

This is the year of the redeemed; for it is the year which their hearts are upon, which, according to the promise, they look for, and have an eye to, in all their present services, sufferings, and struggles. It will be the crown and satisfaction of their faith and hope, and the perpetual perfection of all their joys and honours.

Think, my brethren, think seriously, what that year of the redeemed will be to you. How will the archangel's trumpet sound in *your* ears? will it be a joyful or a dreadful sound? To them that obey the gospel, and live up to it, it will proclaim liberty and honour; but against them who are unbelieving and disobedient, it will denounce war and ruin. That great day will be coronation day to the former, but execution day to the latter. We none of us know but this year of which we now see the beginning may be the year of our death; if it should be so, will it be the year of our redemption? And can we, as such, bid it welcome, and heartily say farewell to this world? *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, and then you may look for death and judgment with joy and rejoicing. Spend your time well, and then no doubt but you shall spend your eternity well; and the year of the redeemed will be the year of your eternal redemption.

(2.) Let me more largely apply it to the militant church; and the particular parts and branches of Christ's kingdom in the world, and their states and interests, those especially with which we are best acquainted, and in which we are most nearly concerned.

I was yesterday endeavouring, as well as I could, to excite your holy joys and thankful praises for the great things God has of late done for us, and our allies, whom he crowned, the last year, with his goodness: I would to-day say something for the encouragement of your faith and hope in God, concerning the events of the year ensuing, and of your earnest prayers to God that it may prove one of the years of the redeemed.

It is no new thing for the church of Christ upon earth to be in distress and bondage, and to stand in need of redemption, notwithstanding the great redemption from sin and hell, which the Lord Jesus has wrought out. It is always militant, it is often afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; and Sion constrained to dwell with the daughters of Babylon.[u] *Israel* had many enemies, was often in the hands, often under the feet, of their enemies; and the redemption of *Israel* was often prayed for, and often promised; much more reason has the *gospel church* (that never had so many promises made to it, relating to the life that now is, as the Old-Testament church had) to expect trouble in this world; to be fought against, and to suffer persecution; in conformity to the example of its head.

The book of the Revelations gives us intimation enough of troublesome times that were to pass over the Church; and though it should be allowed doubtful who the enemy is that is there described, yet it is past dispute, that there should arise an enemy, a powerful and dangerous one, who should make war with those that keep the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ:[v] so that we are not to think it strange, no, not concerning the fiery trial, if the best of God's saints and servants be called out to it, as though some strange thing happened. Behold, Christ has told us before, that when it comes it may be no surprise or offence to us.

But there will come a year of redemption for those who suffer in the cause of Christ; God *will* not, and men *shall* not, contend for ever; nor shall the rod of the wicked rest *always* upon the lot of the righteous, though it may rest *long* there. It is the state of some of the reformed churches abroad, especially those of France, that I have upon my heart, and had in my eye in the choice of this text. The year of their deliverance, whenever it comes, I must call the year of the redeemed.

The excellent Archbishop Tillotson, in a sermon, on Rev. xiv. 13. plainly intimates his suspicion, that the French king is that second beast described (Rev. xiii. 11.) with two horns, France and Navarre, speaking like a dragon, which (says he) may point at a particular sort of armed soldiers called dragons, or *dragoons:* and the number six hundred sixty-six in the name LUDoVICUs: and that the persecution of the French protestants, in that last and great persecution, is there foretold. And in another sermon before King William and Queen Mary in the year 1692, makes him the present great supporter of the mystical Babylon. And if so, a deliverance from under his tyranny may well be prayed and hoped for, in the year of the redeemed.

[Since the preaching of this, I have with much pleasure received encouragement to my hopes, and been confirmed in my choice of this subject, for an appendix to the thanksgiving, by that excellent discourse of the worthy Bishop of Sarum, before the Queen and both Houses of parliament, on the Thanksgiving-day, in which he lays so much stress

[t] Isa. xxxv. 10.

[u] Zech. ii. 7. [v] Rev. xii. 17.

upon the French king's barbarous usage of his protestant subjects, in his description of him as an oppressor, whom it will be the glory of a good prince to help to break in pieces: and he tells that august assembly, "That till the exiles are recalled, till the prisoners are set at liberty, till the edicts that were their inheritance are revived, and compensation is made for the precious blood that has been shed among them; till the oppressor is so bounded, that his own people are secured from oppression, and his neighbours from invasion; till this is done, it is reasonable to hope, that man will say as God has said, *There is no peace to the wicked.*" God keep that word always in the imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, to whom it was spoken, and establish their way before him.]

Four things it will be proper for us to inquire into, concerning the year of the redeemed which we are hoping, and praying, and waiting for. I. What the year of the redeemed will be, and what we expect to be included in it. II. What ground we have to believe that it *will come*, some time. III. What encouragement we have to hope that it will come quickly. IV. What is our duty in reference hereto.

I. What we may expect the year of the redeemed will be, which according to his promise we may look for. You shall see it in three things:

1. The year of recompence for the controversy of Sion, will be the year of the redeemed. Such a year we read of, (Isa. xxxiv. 8.) and it is parallel to this here, for it explains the day of vengeance, which is here said to be in the heart of the victorious Redeemer. Therefore *the sword* that is *bathed in heaven*, shall *come down upon Idumea, the people of God's curse*, because it is the year of recompence for the controversy of Sion.

God espouses Sion's cause, does and will plead it with jealousy:[w] his church is dear to him as the apple of his eye,[x] and, therefore, he has a controversy with those who are injurious to his people; and sooner or later he will reckon with them, and will avenge his own elect, who cry day and night to him, though he bear long.[y] He has a righteous quarrel with them, and he will avenge that quarrel. Barbarous and unrighteous wars fill the measure of a nation's sins; and are that *fourth transgression*, for which, when it is added to *other three*, God *will not turn away the punishment* of a people, as is intimated, (Amos i. 6, 9, 11, 13.) where for three transgressions, and then this as the fourth, God will reckon with Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, because they had *delivered up the whole captivity*, had *pursued with the sword*, and *cast off all pity*, particularly had *ript up the women with child:* would not God visit for these things, should not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this? But barbarous persecutions for righteousness' sake, are yet more provoking: all innocent blood is precious to God, and inquisition will be made for it; but the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, is in a special manner precious to him, and not a drop of it shall be shed but it shall be reckoned for.

The great day of recompence for Sion's controversy will be at the end of time, *in the valley of decision*,[z] when the long depending controversy, after many struggles, will at length be determined; when everlasting tribulation shall be recompensed by the Lord Jesus, to them that troubled his church, and to them who were troubled, everlasting rest.[a] The Lord hasten that glorious day, and make us ready for it!

But we may expect that it will be done, in part, in this world. When God shall have performed his whole work upon mount Sion, and upon Jerusalem, his humbling, reforming work *upon* them, he will then perform his saving work *for* them, and will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks:[b] the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this. All the wrongs done to Sion will be returned to those who did them, and the cup of trembling will be taken out of the hand of the oppressed, and put into the hand of the oppressor.[c] The arm of the Lord will awake as in the days of old, and will put on strength; that mighty arm that humbled Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, Herod, Julian, and other the proud enemies of his church, will be made bare, in our day, against the successors of these sons of pride and violence. The papal kingdom in general, that has for many ages been so barbarously oppressive to the faithful worshippers of God, and the French tyranny in particular, that has been remarkably so in our days, are the enemies, with whom, I think, God has a controversy on Sion's behalf, and the day will come that he will plead it.

His controversy is,

(1.) *For* the sons of Sion, whom they [the persecutors] have abused; the precious sons of Sion, comparable to fine gold; who have not only been despised and thrown by as vessels in which there is no pleasure, but trodden down and broken to pieces as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter.[d] How many excellent ministers and Christians have been sacrificed to the pride and malice of the church of Rome, and with a rage reaching up to heaven, *numbered to the sword* as sheep for the slaughter! and the survivors either miserably enslaved in the galleys, and there *dying daily*, or buried alive in dungeons, or forced to beg their bread in strange countries: and shall not this be recompensed?

(2.) For the songs of Sion, which they have pro-

w Zech. i. 14. x Zech. ii. 8.
y Luke xviii. 7. z Joel iii. 14.

a 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. b Isa. x. 12.
c Isa. li. 22, 23. d Lam. iv. 2.

faned. This head is suggested by that instance of the Babylonians' insolence, and contempt of the Jews and their religion, when they upbraided them in their captivity with the songs of Sion: and, for this, it follows, *Daughter of Babylon, thou art to be destroyed.*[e] The contempt cast upon the pure worship of God as heretical, and the jest made of sacred things, is what God will reckon for.

(3.) For the powers of Sion's king, which they have usurped. All the anointed offices of our Lord Jesus are boldly invaded by the papacy. His prophetical office, by setting up an infallibility in pope or councils; his kingly office, by setting up the supremacy of the bishop of Rome over all churches, and giving him the power of Christ's vicar, or his rival rather, upon earth; and his priestly office, by making the mass a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, and saints and angels mediators between God and man. And shall not the crown of the exalted Redeemer be supported against these usurpations?

(4.) For the pleasant things of Sion's palaces which they have laid waste. God will reckon for the many churches they have demolished, the solemn assemblies they have scattered, the administration of ordinances they have restrained, and the fountains of living water they have stopped up. God keeps an account of all the mischief of this kind done at any time by the papal power and its adherents, and will bring it all into the reckoning when the year of recompences comes.

2. The year of release for God's captives, will be the year of the redeemed; and this is the year we are waiting for. While we enjoy our liberties and opportunities, in peace and without check, we ought to remember them who are in bonds, and to pray for the *turning again of their captivity as the streams in the south.*

(1.) Oppressed consciences, we long to hear of the release of. Of the many that through the force of persecution have been brought to put forth their hands unto iniquity, we hope there are some who have not put forth their hearts to it; but if the force were taken off, would return to the true religion, which they have in word renounced. The triumphs of tyranny over those pretended converts cannot be thought of by any good Christian, without the utmost indignation; for the worst of tyranny is theirs, who take a pride in saying to men's souls, *Bow down, that we may go over;*[f] insulting over conscience, and pretending to command that: and though the utmost point they can gain by all their violence, is that, as it follows there, *men lay their body as the ground, and as the streets to them that go over*, by external compliances, while the soul remains unbended; yet this being a most grievous affliction, (as it is there spoken of,) the freeing of the oppressed from this force will be a most glorious deliverance. We long to hear of the breaking off the yoke from off their necks, that they may no longer be compelled to give that honour to the creature that is the Creator's due, against the conviction of their consciences; but may be brought up out of that Egypt, to sacrifice unto the Lord with freedom, though it were in a wilderness. For, Is Israel a servant? Is conscience a home-born slave, that it is thus spoiled,[g] thus imposed upon? No; it is God's Son, it is his first-born, and he will maintain its privileges. *Lord, bring their souls out of prison, that they may praise thy name.*[h]

(2.) Oppressed confessors, we also long to hear of the release of. Humanity obliges us much, and Christianity much more, to pity the distressed state of those who are in bonds and banishment, in dungeons and in galleys, *for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.* When will the time come that the house of the prisoners shall be opened, and every man's chains fall from his hands, that a spirit of life from God shall enter into the dry bones, that they may live? The account we had some years ago of the brave and daring struggles of the Sevennois, was such a *noise and a shaking*, as we thought portended the *return of bone to his bone*, and a glorious resurrection of God's witnesses; but that affair, for aught we hear, is now asleep: God himself revive that work in the midst of the years, and so hasten the year of the redeemed!

3. The year of the revival of primitive Christianity in the power of it, will be the year of the redeemed. This we wish, we hope, we long to see, both at home and abroad; not the establishment and advancement of any party, but the extinguishing and swallowing up of all parties in the prevalence of *pure religion, and undefiled*, and the dominion of serious godliness in the hearts and lives of all who are called by the Christian name.

When the bounds of the church will be enlarged by the conversion of Pagan and Mahometan nations to the faith of Christ, and the spreading of the gospel in foreign parts; when the enlargement of trade and commerce shall be made serviceable to the interests of Christianity, as it is to our secular interests, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, and the Redeemer's throne shall be set up where Satan's seat is, then will the year of the redeemed come.

When what is amiss in the churches of Christ shall be amended, mistakes rectified, corruptions purged out, and every plant that is not of our heavenly Father's planting, shall be rooted up, and the plants that are, shall be fruitful and flourishing; when the Lord of the temple shall sit as a refiner, and shall purify the sons of Levi, and all the seed of Israel, then shall the year of the redeemed come.[i]

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e Ps. cxxxvii. 3, 8. f Isa. li. 23. g Jer. ii. 14. h Ps. cxlii. 7. i Mal. iii. 3.

When the word of the Lord shall have a free course; when vice and profaneness shall be suppressed, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth;[k] when virtue and piety shall be not only generally praised, but generally practised; when in every place the spiritual incense shall be offered, and a pure offering with pure hands, and the principles of our holy religion shall be copied out into men's hearts and lives, then shall the year of the redeemed come.

When the divisions of the church shall be healed, and the unity of the Spirit kept entirely in the bond of peace, so that Ephraim shall no longer envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim; when all shall agree to love one another, though they cannot agree in every thing to think with one another; when the Lord shall be one, and his name one, and all who profess his name one in Christ, the great centre of unity, then shall the year of the redeemed come.

In a word, when the Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high,[l] so that knowledge shall triumph over ignorance, truth over error, devotion over profaneness, virtue over all immoralities, justice and truth over treachery and all unrighteousness, and Christian love and charity over schism, bigotry, and all uncharitableness; then shall the year of the redeemed come. But alas! *Who shall live when God doeth this?* The Lord hasten it in its season.

II. What ground we have to believe that the year of the redeemed, even the year of recompences for the controversy of Sion, will come some time, whether we live to see it or no.

That which I build upon is,

1. The justice and righteousness of that God who governs the world, and whose kingdom ruleth over all. If men are unrighteous, they shall find to their cost that God is not. If men make nothing of their word, God makes something of his; and the unbelief of men shall not make it void and of none effect. Though clouds and darkness are round about him,[m] so that we know not the way that he takes, verily he is a God who hideth himself; yet judgment and justice are the habitation of his throne; and so will it appear when the mystery of God shall be finished, and the heavens shall declare his righteousness, and neither earth nor hell shall have any thing to object against it. Sooner or later the Lord will be known by the judgment which he executes.

Look up, (my brethren,) look up with an eye of faith to heaven above, and see the Lord God Omnipotent upon a throne, high and lifted up;[o] the throne of glory, the throne of government, which he has prepared in the heavens,[p] and established there, though the heathen rage, and the floods lift up their waves:[q] and hence let us take encouragement to hope, that in due time we shall see an effectual check given to the "boundless ambition of France," as the proclamations often call it. The universal Monarch will not suffer himself to be rivalled and insulted by a bold pretender to an universal monarchy; nor will he, who alone is absolute, have the flowers of his crown plucked by a pretender to absolute sovereignty. The humbling and abasing of such proud men, treading them down, and hiding them in the dust together, by which the great Jehovah proves himself to be God; and in which he glories, above any thing, in his discourse with Job, out of the whirlwind: *Do thou do so* (says he) *and then will I also confess unto thee.*[r] And will he not do it in our day?

Look abroad, (my brethren,) look abroad with pleasure upon this earth, and see it, as wild as it is, and as bad as it is, under the government of a righteous God, whose eyes run to and fro through it, and who does according to his will, not only in the armies of heaven, who are not too high to be above his control; but among the inhabitants of the earth, who are not too mean to be below his cognizance. They are mistaken who think God has forsaken the earth,[s] and that he cannot judge through the dark cloud;[t] who say in their hearts, *God hath forgotten*, and, *Thou wilt not require it.* The day is coming when it shall be so evident, that every man will own it: *verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth.*[u]

Suppose we could not read the doom of the papacy, and the French tyranny, out of the depths of the Apocalypse, we may read it out of the Proverbs of Solomon, the plainest book in all the Bible; for there we are told, *men's pride will bring them low; wealth gotten by vanity will be diminished; he that seeketh mischief it shall come upon him; and whoso doth violence to innocent blood, shall flee to the pit, and no man shall stay him.* And no word of God shall fall to the ground.

The tender concern God has for his church and people. His redeemed are very dear to him, and he is jealous for them, as his portion, and peculiar treasure; he takes pleasure in their prosperity, and in all their afflictions he is afflicted; and he takes what is done against them as done against himself: and shall not he avenge his *own elect*, because they are *his own?* He who purchased *the soul of his turtle dove* with the blood of his Son, will not deliver it into the *hand of the multitude of its adversaries.*[v]

Especially, considering how much his own honour is interested in the concerns of his church and people. If they be abandoned and cast out of his care what will the Egyptians say; it will for ever disgrace the throne of his glory, and be the reproach of his government; so that how mean soever they are, and unworthy he should do any thing for them; yet,

k Ps. cvi. 42. l Isa. xxxii. 15. m Ps. xcvii. 2.
n Ps. l. 6. o Isa. vi. 1. p Ps. ciii. 19.
q Ps. xciii. 2, 3. r Job xl. 12—14. s Ezek. ix. 9.
t Job xxii. 13. u Ps. lviii. 11. v Ps. lxxiv. 19.

no doubt, he will work for his own name, his own great name, that that may not be polluted among the heathen.

The many exceeding great and precious promises which he has made in his word concerning his church, and on which he has caused us to hope: on these our faith must build, and we shall find them a firm and never failing foundation. God has spoken in his holiness,[v] and we will rejoice in what he has promised, it is all our own. He has promised, that *he will judge for his people, and repent himself concerning his servants, when he sees that their strength is gone.*[x] *That for the oppression of the poor,* and *the sighing of the needy, he will arise and set them in safety.*[y] That the *Redeemer shall come to Sion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*[z] That there shall be no more *any pricking brier or grieving thorn, nor any to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain.*[a]

It was shown in vision to the prophet Daniel what great havoc would be made, by persecuting powers of the church in the latter times of it; but at the same time, the deliverance of the church and the destruction of its enemies is foretold. *Antiochus shall be mighty, and shall wonderfully destroy the people of the Holy One: and through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and he shall magnify himself in his heart; and by peace* (more than by war) *he shall destroy many,* (who can avoid thinking of the French king at the reading of this?) *but he shall be broken without hand;*[b] or, as it is in a parallel place, *he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*[c] And of another great enemy, arising out of the fourth kingdom, which seems to be the papacy, it is said, that he shall *wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws* by an unlimited power; and *they shall be given into his hand,* by the divine permission, for wise and holy ends, *until a time, times, and the dividing of time.*[d] But what will come of him at last? Shall he reign thus for ever, because he clotheth himself with cedar?[e] No, the judgment shall sit, and they shall *take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.* The God of truth has said it, and shall stand firm, *He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity;* and *he that killeth with the sword, shall be killed by the sword, when his day shall come to fall:* and in the mean time, here is the patience and the faith of the saints.[f]

2. The performance of these promises to the church in all ages: God has often delivered, always delivered at last, and, therefore, we trust he does and will deliver. After Israel's long affliction in Egypt, that house of sore bondage, at length God came down to deliver them, and gave an emblem of their condition in a bush that burned, and yet was not consumed. In the times of the judges, first one enemy, and then another, mightily oppressed them, for so many years; but in due time God raised them up a deliverer, and sent from heaven to save them. The captivity in Babylon came to an end at the set time. The treading under foot of the sanctuary, by Antiochus, was limited to a certain number of days, and then the sanctuary was cleaned.[g] Thus the Jewish nation, as long as it continued the church of God, though often distressed, was still delivered, till by rejecting Christ and his Gospel, they threw themselves out of the church; and now they wait in vain for redemption from their present dispersion, and cannot expect it till they shall look unto him whom they pierced.

The Christian church has been often afflicted from its youth up, groaned long under the yoke of the pagan powers; but in Constantine's time the year of the redeemed came, when the great red dragon was cast out, and his angels who adored him were cast out with him; when idolatry was abolished, and persecution came to an end, and that voice was heard in heaven, *Now is come salvation, and strength, the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.*[h] —Many have been the troubles of the followers of Christ; but the Lord has delivered them out of them all. Now, God is the same *yesterday, to-day, and for ever;* he is God, and changes not; his arm is not shortened, his ear is not heavy, his love is not spent, nor are his counsels changed: and, therefore, we are sure, the year of the redeemed will come in due time, and though it tarry we will wait for it; for *the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie.*

III. What encouragement we have to hope that the year of the redeemed will come shortly; that the rescue of the oppressed and the ruin of the oppressor is not far off; that the progress and advancement of the protestant religion in Europe, with the reviving and flourishing of serious piety in all the churches of Christ, are blessings at the door.

As to this, let me premise, that we ought to be very sober and modest in our conjectures concerning the time of the accomplishment of Scripture prophecies. Buxtorf, I remember, somewhere quotes a saying of the Jewish rabbins, *Rumpatur spiritus eorum qui supputant tempora—Calculating the times breaks the spirit.* They have so long and so often looked for the coming of the Messiah, and been disappointed, that they curse him who fixes the time of his coming. We despair not of the things themselves that God has promised; but we *presume not* to limit the Holy One of Israel, or to set him his time; we wrong the promise by doing so, and are tempted to think, when Providence breaks our measures, it is the breaking of God's word,—and nothing tends more to the breaking of our spirits: whereas

v Ps. lx. 6. x Deut. xxxii. 36. y Ps. xii. 5.
z Rom. xi. 26. a Isa. xi. 8 b Dan. viii. 24, 25.
c Dan. xi. 45. d Dan. vii. 25, 26. e Jer. xxii. 15.
f Rev. xiii. 10. g Dan. viii. 14. h Rev. xii. 9, 10.

*he that believeth doth not make haste.* Many who have been peremptory in foretelling the time when the year of the redeemed would come, have had the mortification of living to see themselves mistaken.

If we look into ourselves, we shall find a great deal to discourage us, and make us fear that this glorious year is yet a great way off; so conscious are we to ourselves of a frame and disposition of soul that renders us utterly unmeet to share in the joys of such a day. Our faith is weak; our spirits are narrow; our prayers are cold and customary; our conversation loose and careless; and the *things which remain* among us *are ready to die.* Iniquity abounds, and the love of many is waxen cold. Our own private interests, it is to be feared, lie nearer our hearts than the great and general interests of the kingdom of God among men. Our divisions are very threatening, especially the mismanagement of them: these are ill omens, and occasion many a melancholy thought to those who seek the good of the gospel Jerusalem. We now think ourselves within sight of Canaan: but how justly might God for our unbelief and murmuring hurry us back into the wilderness again, and swear in his wrath that we should never enter into his rest? We should have the more reason to fear these fatal consequences of our present distempers, but that it is intimated to us, that the Son of man will come at a time when he shall find little faith on the earth,[i] that the divine fidelity be the more magnified.

But for all this, we are not altogether without hope, that the year of the redeemed may come shortly: who knows but that this year, which we are now brought to the beginning of, may in some instances go far toward it? Though if it should set us back, and prove a year of disappointment, we must own that God is righteous; yet if it should set us forward, and make large advances towards it, we shall have this to add to the comfort of it, that it will be the answer of our prayers, and the crown of our hopes in God at the beginning of the year.

I dare not build much upon the opinion of Mr. Joseph Mede, and other learned men, (though I have a great value for their judgment,) who compute the period of 1260 days, that is, years, so often spoken of in the Revelation, which should end in the resurrection of the witnesses, and the downfall of Babylon, to fall not many years hence. However that be,

1. It is plain that the measure of the iniquity of the church's enemies fills apace: the powers we are contesting with, after all the mortifications they have been under, as if they had bid defiance to repentance, seem to grow more and more false and treacherous, cruel and barbarous; which cannot but ripen their vintage apace for the great wine-press of the wrath of God.[k] That which hastened the descent of the king of Babylon down to the sides of the pit, was, not only that he had made the earth to tremble, and shaken kingdoms; that he had made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; but, which was worst of all, he opened not the house of his prisoners,[l] that is, God's Israel, whom he detained in captivity, those poor to whom Daniel counselled him to show mercy, that it might have been a lengthening of his tranquillity.[m]

Well, when he who *spoileth* though he *was not spoiled*, and *dealt treacherously* with those who *dealt fairly* with him, shall *cease to spoil*, and shall *make an end to deal treacherously*;[n] not in a way of reformation, that we have more reason to pray for than hope for, but so as that his measure shall be full; then expect that he shall be spoiled, and men shall deal treacherously with him, that is, shall show him that he has wretchedly deceived himself. Babylon's doom is, *Reward her as she rewarded you.*[o]

2. The present posture of affairs gives us a very hopeful prospect. The pride of the French king has been much humbled of late, and his power broken; and (which is very encouraging) the great things done against him, have been done chiefly by protestant armies, which, we hope, will animate protestant princes and states to unite for the support of the reformation, that it may recover the ground which in many places it has lost, and may gain more; for many, we hope, will join themselves to us, when they see that God favours our righteous cause, and that he is with us of a truth.

For our future safety, Manoah's wife shall be my prophetess: *If the Lord had been pleased to kill us*, he would not thus have accepted and answered our prayers, *nor would he, as at this time, have showed us such things as these.*[p]

And for our further success and victory, even Haman's wife shall be my prophetess: *If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall*, there is no remedy; the seed of the Jews will without fail be victorious, whenever the scale turns in their favour; *thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him.*[q] As for God, his work is perfect; when he begins he will make an end. What we have received from God imboldens us to expect more; when God *brake the heads of Leviathan*[r] *in pieces, he gave him to be meat* to the faith and hope of his *people inhabiting the wilderness*, and so encouraged them to expect, that they should inhabit Canaan shortly. God is plainly selling *Sisera into the hand of a woman.*

IV. Nothing remains now, but to tell you in a word or two, what is our duty in reference hereunto. Have we all this reason to think that the year of the redeemed will come, that surely it will come quickly?

i Luke xviii. 8. k Rev. xiv. 19. l Isa. xiv. 17.
m Dan. iv. 27. n Isa. xxxiii. 1.
o Rev. xviii. 6. p Judg. xiii. 23.
q Esth. vi. 13. r Ps. lxxiv. 14.

1. Then let us be very earnest with God in prayer, to hasten this glorious year. When Daniel understood by books that the seventy years of Jerusalem's desolations were just expiring, then he set his face with more than ordinary fervour and fixedness to seek the Lord God by prayer and supplication, with fasting.[s] When we see mercies coming toward us, let us go forth to meet them, with so much the more cheerfulness, by our prayers. *Men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*[t] but, especially, at such a time, that when God's *beloved is delivered*, and he *saves with his right hand*, we each of us may have the pleasure of saying, with the Psalmist, God has therein *answered me*.[u]

Let our closets and families witness for us, that we pray, that we pray daily, that we pray earnestly, for the peace of Jerusalem, as those who prefer it before our chief joy. Pray for the uniting of protestants at home, and for protestant princes and states abroad; pray for the prosperity of our armies and navies, and those of our allies; pray for the pouring out of the Spirit upon us from on high, and then the year of the redeemed would soon come.

2. Let us prepare ourselves for the comfort of those great things, which we hope God will do for his church in our days, by bringing every thought within us into obedience to those two royal laws of holiness and love. When we expect God to do wonders among us, it concerns us to sanctify ourselves.[v] Let us carry on the holy war in our own bosoms against sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, with vigour, and pursuant to our baptismal vow, fight manfully under the banner of the Lord Jesus; then may we hope that our prayers for the prosperity of the war our nation is engaged in, will be acceptable, and prevalent in heaven. But what joy can we have of our triumphs over the French, if we suffer our own lusts to triumph over us? If indeed we desire the progress of the reformation in the churches of Christ, let us show it by carrying on the reformation of our own hearts and lives and families. Remember that law of Moses, *When the host goeth forth against the enemy, then keep thyself from every wicked thing*, lest you undo by your sins what they do by their swords.

3. Let us with patience wait for the year of the redeemed. If the days of our brethren's affliction should yet be prolonged, and their deliverance be deferred, yet let us not be weary, nor faint in our minds. Though the year of the redeemed come not in our time, the time we looked for it, yet believe, it will come in the best time, the time that infinite wisdom has appointed; and when it does come, it will abundantly recompense us for all our waiting. The longest voyages make the richest returns; and the church's triumphs are the most welcome, when they are the crown of great and long expectations: *So, this is our God, we have waited for him.*[w] Let us not upon every disappointment, arraign either the providence of God, or the conduct of those in public trusts. Leave it to God to govern the world, and to the queen and her councils under him, to govern the realm; and let us in our obscurity be easy and satisfied, and believe that all will end well at last.

But if the year of the redeemed should not come in our days; if the carcasses of this generation should fall in this wilderness, as justly they may for our unbelief and murmuring, and we should not go over Jordan to see that goodly mountain, and Lebanon: yet let it suffice us, that those who shall come after us shall enter into that rest. Joseph dies in Egypt, but lays his bones in confidence that God will surely visit Israel. Let us give all diligence to make sure our eternal redemption, and then we shall be happy, though we live not to see the glories of the year of the redeemed on earth; and may depart in the prophet Daniel's dismission, *Go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest;* and, whatever thy lot be on earth, thou shalt stand in thy lot, (and it shall be a blessed lot,) in the end of the days.[x]

[s] Dan. ix. 2. [t] Luke xviii. 1. [u] Ps. cviii. 6. [v] Josh. iii. 4. [w] Isa. xxv. 9. [x] Dan. xii. 13.

# A SERMON

CONCERNING THE

# WORK AND SUCCESS OF THE MINISTRY;

*Preached at the Tuesday Lecture, at Salters' Hall, June 25, 1710.*

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LUKE x. 5, 6.

*And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall return to you again.*

PROSPECT of success, as it is the spring of action, so it is the spur to industry and resolution. Issachar, that tribe of husbandmen, would never bow his shoulder to bear, and couch, as he does, between two burthens, much less could he rejoice in his tents of labour, but that he sees the land is pleasant,[a] and from it he hopes to reap the precious fruits of the earth: nor would Zebulun, that tribe of merchants, be a haven of ships, and rejoice in his hazardous going out, but that he expects to suck of the abundance of the seas, and of treasures hid in the sand.[b] Whatever business a man has, he cannot long oblige himself to abide by it, unless he can promise himself to get by it.

Now it is worth while to inquire, what is the gain, and what the success, which we, who are ministers, have in prospect, and which we bear up ourselves in our work with the prospect of. What is it which we may feed ourselves with the hopes of?

1. Worldly advantages we must not promise to ourselves, in common with the children of this world: for the soldiers of Jesus Christ, though they walk in the flesh, do not war after the flesh;[c] they negociate the affairs of a kingdom that is not of this world.

They who deal in secular business, think they succeed well and gain their point, if they raise an estate, and advance their families, and make to themselves a name among the great ones of the earth; they rejoice because their wealth is great, and their hand has gotten much, and say, *Soul, take thine ease.* But the ministry, though it is the best calling, is the worst trade, in the world; that is, it will prove so to those who make a mere trade of it, looking no further than to get money by it, and to enrich themselves.

We cannot propose to ourselves advantages of this kind, for the same Lord who ordained, that they *who preach the gospel should live of the gospel,*[d] and live comfortably, has also told them, *In the world ye must have tribulation.*[e] Nay, we may not make these things our end in undertaking or prosecuting this work: we debase our calling and contradict our profession if we do. Shall we, who preach the great things of another world to others, so far forget ourselves as to seek great things to ourselves in this world, when God in saying to Baruch has said to all his servants the prophets, *Seek them not?*[f]

2. Spiritual and eternal advantages in the other world, if we be faithful, we may hope for, and encourage ourselves with the prospect of, in common with all good Christians. If we be sincere, and diligent in our work, and our hearts upright with God, we shall have the favour of God, and the testimony of our consciences for us, and eternal life in its earnests and first-fruits abiding in us; and it is much our own fault, if we excel not in graces and comforts, by our constant converse with divine things. And if through grace we endure to the end good and faithful servants, our Master's "*Well done,*" the *joy of our Lord* into which we shall enter, and the *crown of life*[g] which we shall receive when the chief Shepherd shall appear,[h] will be an abundant recompence for all our services and sufferings: and we shall then say, we have had good success in our work.

Let us therefore fear, lest such a rest, such a glory,

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[a] Gen. xlix. 14, 15. [b] Deut. xxxiii. 19.
[c] 2 Cor. x. 3. [d] 1 Cor. ix. 14.
[e] John xvi. 33. [f] Jer. xlv. 5.
[g] Matt. xxv. 21. [h] 1 Pet. v. 4.

being set before us, any of us should seem to come short of it,[i] and lest while we preach to others, and show them the way to heaven, we ourselves should be shut out, and become cast away at last;[k] and, being moved with this fear, let us walk very circumspectly, and take heed to ourselves, that we may not only save those who hear us, but ourselves in the first place. But,

3. There is a particular good success besides this, which faithful ministers have in prospect, which they aim at, and animate themselves with, in their work, and that is, doing good to the souls of men; and, as instruments in the hand of God, serving the interests of Christ's kingdom in the world. We are shepherds, we are vine-dressers, and we reckon we have good success, if the flock increase, and the vineyard flourish, and be fruitful, to the honour of him who is the great Owner of both. We are Christ's soldiers, and if we be instrumental to curb and restrain the enemies of his kingdom, and to reduce and protect the subjects of it; if by the blessing of God on our ministry the ignorant be instructed, the simple made wise for their souls and eternity, and the wise made to increase in learning; if the bad be made good, and the good made better; then do we prosper, and then have we good success. This is that we should have in our eye, and which we should lay near our hearts, with seriousness and concern to the last degree. That is that, for the compassing of which we should study and use the most apt and proper means, and should willingly spend and be spent; it is that fruit of the travail of our soul, which, if we *see* it, will be abundantly to our satisfaction,[l] and the pain will be forgotten for joy of it; but if we see it not, the case is more sad than that of a miscarrying womb and dry breasts,[m] and because of it we go on in heaviness, nay, in bitterness of spirit.[n]

But though so much of our comfort is bound up in the success of our labour, yet we lie under this disadvantage, above those of other professions, that we are at great uncertainty concerning it, and for the most part very much in the dark. The physician knows whether he cures his patient or no, and the lawyer whether he carries his client's cause or no: but we preach, from day to day, to *work upon* the hearts of men; and though sometimes the effect is visible either one way or the other, *some men's sins are open beforehand*, and the *good works of some are likewise manifest beforehand*,[o] some are much our joy and crown, others much our grief and shame;—yet more often it is not so; we cannot tell who are savingly wrought upon, and who are not: but this makes the foundation of God to stand sure, *The Lord knows them that are his*,[p] whether we do or no. And in this matter, which cannot but be very much upon our hearts, this text will give us both direction and satisfaction: for it shows us how we must do our duty, and then leave the success with the grace of God,—as in the affairs of this life, we are to leave it with the providence of God.

The text is part of the *instructions* which our Lord Jesus gave to the seventy disciples, when he gave them their *commission*; for those two will go together: Christ sends none on his errand, whom he does not give in some measure to understand their message. These instructions here are much the same with those he gave to the twelve apostles; and what he said to them both in exhortation and encouragement, he says in effect to all his ministers, excepting some few things that were peculiar to the state and work of those first preachers of the gospel.

My text will give us not only a fair occasion, but good help too, to consider two things:

I. The work and office of ministers; wherever they come, they are to say, *Peace be here.*

II. Their success in the discharge of this office; which is according as they do or do not meet with the sons of peace. And the opening of these two things, I trust, by the blessing of God, may be of some use both to ministers and people.

I. We may observe here, what the charge and work of gospel ministers is, and what they are warranted and instructed to do; they are appointed by the Prince of peace to be the messengers of peace, and wherever they come, they are to say, *Peace be here.* If a minister be asked, as Samuel was, *Comest thou peaceably*, he may answer in the name of him who sent him, *Yes, peaceably*;[q] and such their temper and behaviour ought to be, as to be able to answer so for themselves. They are heralds indeed to proclaim war against sin; but to the children of men they are sent as ambassadors preaching peace by Jesus Christ;[r] who himself first came (as one pleased he had such an errand to perform) and preached peace to them that were afar off, and to them that were nigh;[s] and has appointed his ministers as residents to negociate this great affair, while time lasts, for so long the treaty will continue.

1. The ministers whom Christ here sends forth are supposed to enter into private houses; and *that* under the character of Christ's ambassadors, and in the execution of their office,—the business of which they must be carrying on, not only into whatsoever *synagogue*, but into whatsoever *house*, they enter. We shall find them in *private houses*, either because thither their public preaching will be driven, or because thither they themselves will carry it.

(1.) Sometimes they were forced into such corners. Though the message they brought had every thing in it to recommend them to an universal acceptance, yet it is probable, in many places they were not permitted to preach in the synagogues; the rulers

i Heb. iv. 1. k 1 Cor. ix. 27. l Isa. liii. 11. m Hos. ix. 14. n Ezek. iii. 14.

o 1 Tim. v. 24, 25. p 2 Tim. ii. 19. q 1 Sam. xvi. 5. r Acts x. 36. s Eph. ii. 17.

there who had a jealous eye upon them would take care to keep them thence; and they then retired into private houses, and preached to as many as would come to hear them there. Those who cannot do what they would for God and the souls of men, must do what they can, and God will accept of them.

The gospel of Christ is never the less honourable in itself, nor should be ever the less acceptable to us, for any disadvantageous circumstances of this kind, which the preaching of it may be at any time reduced to. It is not the place but the heart that God looks at.[t] It was in the house of Cornelius that the Holy Ghost first descended, in the dew of Peter's preaching upon the Gentiles. The master of the feast sent his servants into the highways and the hedges, to invite guests to the wedding supper.

And those who, in such a cloudy and dark day, open their doors to God's ministers and people, out of a sincere love to Christ and his gospel, whatever inconvenience they may sustain, shall be no losers by it in the end; sure a church of Christ brought into a house (and we often in the New Testament meet with a "church in the house") cannot but bring as valuable a blessing along with it, though perhaps not so sensible a one, as the ark of God brought into the house of Obed-edom.[u] Simon Peter was soon repaid with a great draught of fishes, for lending Christ his boat to preach a sermon out of,[v] and (which was a better reward) was made a fisher of men.

We have reason to be thankful to God that we are not reduced to such straits as our suffering brethren in France are at this day reduced to; but it is our wisdom to prepare for changes, and to resolve, that whithersoever the ark removes, we will remove and go after it.[w]

(2.) They always embraced such opportunities of spreading the gospel, and doing good to the souls of men, as visiting people at their houses gave them. Our Lord Jesus preached wherever he visited. Mary heard his word, and Martha should have heard it, in their own house.[x] St. Paul, at Ephesus, taught not only publicly in the synagogue, and the school of Tyrannus, but from house to house;[y] and the apostles, at Jerusalem, not only in the temple, but *in every house* continued to teach and preach Jesus Christ.[z]

Private and personal application would make our public work the more successful; and some, perhaps, will give a more earnest heed to that which is spoken to them, by themselves, about their souls and their salvation, than to that which they only hear in common with others. Peter must not only cast a net, but sometimes cast a hook, into the sea, with which the fish may be caught that had escaped the net.[a] And if the words of the wise be as *nails*, this will help to fasten them, as *nails in a sure place*.[b] Hereby we may come to know what people have to say against being religious, and what their excuses are with which they support themselves in a sinful way; and by giving suitable answers to both, may help them over the particular difficulty that lies in their way.

Thus, we may express more condescension and compassion (two excellent principles in a minister) than we can in our public administrations. Thus, we may give more particular reproofs and admonitions, counsels and comforts, suited to the case of each person and family; may, with that which is indeed the tongue of the learned, speak a word in season;[c] and may learn the better how to direct the arrow in public, that it may not always come from a bow *drawn at a venture*.

But if the priest's lips should *keep knowledge*, and have it ready to impart upon all occasions, the people should seek the law at his mouth,[d] and desire instruction. Ministers would gladly give you the best advice they can about your spiritual concerns, if you would *ask it*, or *give them an opportunity for it*; and, when they come to your houses, or you are in company with them, would ask, (as of old they used to do of the prophet,) *What hath the Lord answered thee?* and, *What hath the Lord spoken?*[e] *Watchman, what of the night?* They who would have the benefit of an oracle must consult it.

2. They are instructed to say, *Peace be to this house*; that is, to the inhabitants of it; to all under this roof; to the master of the family, for be he ever so great he needs this blessing; and to all the members of the family, for be they ever so mean they are not excluded from this blessing. In Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free. Ignatius's bishop was to take cognizance even of the servants of the families that belonged to his charge.

*Peace be to you*, was a common form of salutation among the Jews; but no doubt it is here intended for more than a compliment, or a piece of civility and good manners: it does indeed well become Christ's ministers to be very respectful and obliging to all. The just and undissembled expressions of honour and tenderness to those with whom they converse, will not only be an ornament to their profession, but may help to gain them an interest in the affections of people, improvable to the best purposes; as on the contrary, their ministry may be prejudiced more than they are aware of, by a rude and morose behaviour. But these words here, are to be used by them in the same sense, and with the same solemnity that Christ used them to his disciples, after his resurrection, when he stood in the midst, and said unto them, once and again, *Peace be unto you*;[f] by

t Acts i. 24. u 2 Sam. vi. 12. v Luke v. 3, 4. w Josh. iii. 3. x Luke x. 39. y Acts xx. 20. z Acts v. 42.

a Matt. xvii. 27. b Eccl. xii. 11. c Isa. l. 4. d Mal. ii. 7. e Jer. xxiii. 37. f John xx. 19, 21.

which he lodged this peace with them, as a sacred deposit, to be communicated by them, as his agents, to the church: *Peace be to you*, and, in you, to all believers. Receive the olive-branch of peace, and carry it with you to all nations; receive from him who has authority to give it, and who can command peace to be the fruit of the lips, the fruit of *your* lips.[g] They were to go into all the world, with these words in their mouths, *Peace be unto you.* They were for peace; but when they spake, the world was for war[h]—with them, with Christ himself.

Now the gospel they preach was an everlasting gospel,[i] and Jesus Christ is, in it, the same *to-day* that he was *yesterday*;[k] and, therefore, what *they* were to say, in the same name, *we* are to say, *we* do say: *Peace be unto you.* I say, (the unworthiest of all who are employed on this great errand,) *Peace be to this congregation;* Peace to every one who hears me this day. *For my brethren and companions' sake, I will now say, Peace be unto you.*[l] That is,

(1.) We are to preach peace to all; to publish and proclaim the gospel of peace; to notify to the children of men the covenant of peace; to invite them to come and take the benefit of it, and for their greater satisfaction to administer the seals of it. When the first-begotten was brought into the world, the angels of heaven, in token of their communion with the church militant, sang, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace*;[m] and when he was brought into *Jerusalem*, the disciples on earth, in token of their communion with the church triumphant, sang, *Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest*;[n]—so that both the upper and lower world share in, and give thanks for, this peace. The ministers of the gospel bring good tidings, for they publish peace.[o] We are warranted to make a general offer of peace to all, upon easy and reasonable terms: PEACE, that is,

[1.] Reconciliation,—and no war. The case is plain that sin has been the parent of disagreement between God and man. As soon as ever man had eaten the forbidden fruit, his God, who made him, became his enemy and fought against him;[p] in token of which, a cherubim was set, with a flaming sword that turned every way, threatening death, while he kept the way of the tree of life.[q] The quarrel is hereditary; we are by nature children of wrath, because children of disobedience; the broken law lays us under the curse, and sets the terrors of God in array against us. And if God proceed in his controversy with us, it will certainly terminate in our endless ruin; for who knows the power of his anger?

But is the breach wide as the sea, that it cannot be healed? Is the case desperate? Blessed be God, it is not; the gospel we preach shows us that God's thoughts toward us are thoughts of peace;[r] that Christ undertakes to be our peace;[s] and thus the counsels of peace were *between them both.*[t] It discovers to us how satisfaction was made for the violation of the first covenant, and a foundation laid for a treaty of peace; how the enmity was slain by the cross of Christ, and a happy expedient found to bring God and man together again in a new covenant. Behold, *we bring you glad tidings of great joy*, the best news that ever came from heaven to earth, that *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*[u] There is not only a cessation of arms, and a truce for a time, but methods proposed for a lasting, an everlasting, accommodation; Infinite Wisdom having found a ransom.

Now when we say, *Peace be unto you*, we thereby proclaim to the rebellious children, That whoever will may come and take the benefit of this act of indemnity; conditions of peace are offered them, which they cannot with any colour of reason except against; God is willing to be reconciled to you upon gospel terms; and, therefore, we as ambassadors for Christ beseech you in his stead to be reconciled to him.[v] You deceive yourselves into your own ruin, if you say you shall have peace though you go on still in your sins;[w] but we court you to your own happiness, when we tell you you shall have peace, if you return, and repent, and yield yourselves to the Lord. The great God, by his prophet, has assured us, that he is not implacable, for fury is not in him;[x] (righteous he is, but not furious;) yet withal that he is irresistible, and we are unable to stand before him, for *who would set the briars and thorns against him in battle?* which will be so far from giving check to a consuming fire, that they will bring fuel to it; he will *go through them, yea, he will burn them together.* What must a man do then who sees himself ready to be swallowed up by the divine wrath? The God of heaven tells him what he must do: *Let him take hold on my strength*, (take hold by a lively faith on Christ crucified, who is the power of God, and his arm revealed,) *that he make peace with me;* let him submit, and return to his allegiance, accommodate himself to his God, and to his duty, and *he shall make peace with me; he* shall have the comfort of it, and all shall be well.

[2.] Riches,—and no want. It is not only the extinction of an unhappy controversy, but the settling of a happy correspondence; *Peace be to you*, is as much as *All good be to you.* When the Psalmist prayed for *peace within Zion's walls*, he explained himself in the next words, *prosperity be within thy palaces*;[y] and meant no less, when, for his brethren and companions' sake, he said, *Peace be within thee.* So when we say, *Peace be to this assembly*, we make

g Isa. lvii. 19. h Ps. cxx. 7. i Rev. xiv. 6. k Heb. xiii. 8. l Ps. cxxii. 8. Gal. vi. 16. m Luke ii. 14. n Luke xix. 38. o Isa. lii. 7. p Isa. lxiii. 10. q Gen. iii. 24. r Jer. xxix. 11. s Eph. ii. 14. t Zech. vi. 13. u 2 Cor. v. 19. v 2 Cor. v. 20. w Deut. xxix. 19. x Isa. xxvii. 4, 5. y Ps. cxxii. 7, 8.

you in God's name a fair offer of life and all happiness; of all that which is agreeable to the nature of your souls, as you are rational and immortal creatures,—and to their necessity, as you are guilty and sinful; of the benefit of all those exceeding great and precious promises, which will make a portion for you, a *portion for ever*, for the life that now is, and that which is to come.

*Peace be to you*, that is, prosperity, soul prosperity, all the welfare of both worlds, the *unsearchable riches of Christ*,[a] and all that substance which they who love wisdom are made to inherit;[b] not only food that you may live, but gold tried in the fire that you may be rich.[c] All the treasures that are hid in the new covenant, in that abridgment of it, *God will be to you a God;* they are all your own, if you please to make them so by a lively faith. This spiritual wealth and riches shall be in that house on which this peace rests, even righteousness that endures for ever.[d]

*Peace be to you*, that is, comfort and joy, and a holy serenity and satisfaction of soul, such as the smiles of the world cannot give, nor its frowns take away; that peace which is the effect of righteousness, even quietness and assurance for ever;[e] everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace. This is that wine and milk, that nourishment and refreshment for the soul, which are to be bought without money and without price;[f] that water of life, of which we may take freely, abundantly, and free of cost.[g] *This day is* SALVATION *come to this house*,[h] so our Saviour himself explains this comprehensive word: PEACE *be to this house*, all the THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION.

We are in God's name to make a general offer of this peace to all, not knowing to whom it belongs, or who will accept of it: as Cyrus proclaimed liberty to all the children of the captivity, though none shook off their chains, but those *whose spirits God raised to go up*. The offer is made to you this day, and we *beseech you that you receive not the grace of God herein in vain*. You are not sure that ever you shall have another offer made you, and therefore, for the Lord's sake, do not reject this.

(2.) We are to pray for peace to all; not only to make a tender of it, but to seek unto God for it. *Peace be unto you* is the benediction, which with *grace*, necessarily prefixed, the apostle Paul gives to all his friends to whom he directs his epistles, *Grace be unto you, and peace*. And all the ministers of Christ must give themselves to prayer as well as to the ministry of the word,[k] must speak *to God for you*, as well as *from God to you*. The priests under the law were not only to teach the people the good knowledge of God, but to bless them in the name of the Lord, to bless them with this blessing in the text, *The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.*[l]

Our prayers should be mixed with our preaching, as St. Paul's are with his writing, in all his epistles. A devout and pious ejaculation in the midst of a discourse, may help to raise the hearts of those we speak to, as well as our own. However, our preaching must be both prefaced and attended with our prayers, else we do but half our work, nay, we do none at all to any purpose. The watchmen on Jerusalem's *walls* must give God no rest, but continue instant in prayer:[m] and certainly we shall do so if we be in good earnest in our work, and desire to see the fruit of it; for it depends entirely on the divine blessing. We labour in vain, if God say of us as he did of some of the prophets of old, *they shall not profit this people at all:*[n] nor will our pains in dressing the vineyard turn to any account, if God *command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.*[o] And the dews of this blessing must be fetched down by prayer. *God will for it be inquired of*, and it is fit he should.

It is certain that God's grace can bring people to heaven without our preaching: but our preaching can never bring people to heaven without God's grace; and, therefore, we should be as much in care, as much in earnest, to pray for the operations of grace, as to *propose* the offers of grace; and may better expect in that way to succeed. If we cannot preach people to Christ, let us endeavour to pray them to Christ; for in vain do we merely prophesy upon the dry bones, saying, *O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord*, for though the effect of it may be a noise and a shaking, yet still there is no breath in them; we must therefore look up, by prayer, to the Spirit, as the prophet did, *Come, O breath, and breathe upon these slain;*[p] and if a spirit of life from God enter into them, then, and not till then, we gain our point. God can persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem,[q] when we cannot.

Let us therefore pray for the peace of the church—the house—the heart—into which we enter with the gospel: that is,

[1.] We must earnestly desire the welfare and salvation of precious souls; and not be cold and indifferent about it. We know not God's secret will, and therefore must concur with his revealed will; by which it appears, not only that he does not desire the death of sinners, but that he most pathetically wishes their life and happiness; *O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandment!*[r] says he; *O that Israel had walked in my ways!*[s] And when they promised fair, *O that there were such a heart in them!*[t] And thus should we stand affected:—"Here are precious souls, capable of eternal bliss, but in danger of eternal ruin; O that we could prevail with

a Eph. iii. 8. b Prov. viii. 21. c Rev. iii. 18. d Ps. cxii. 3. e Isa. xxxii. 17. f Isa. lv. 1. g Rev. xxii. 17. h Luke xix. 9. i Ezra i. 3, 5. k Acts vi. 4.

l Numb. vi. 26. m Isa. lxii. 6. n Jer. xxiii. 32. o Isa. v. 6. p Ezek. xxxvii. 7—10. q Gen. ix. 27. r Isa. xlviii. 18. s Ps. lxxxi. 13. t Deut. v. 29.

them to flee from the wrath to come, and to lay hold on everlasting life! O that we might be instrumental to snatch them as brands out of the burning, and to present them as living sacrifices to God!"

We should earnestly desire the *salvation of all*, and the *success of the gospel in the hands of others*; St. Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles; and yet his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, That they may be saved,[a] and that the apostles of the circumcision might see of the fruit of their labours. But we should, in a special manner, be solicitous for the spiritual welfare of those *to whom we are sent*, and with whom *we deal*; the flourishing of the vineyards which we are made the keepers of. *These* were to the apostle as his children, his little children, whom he had a particular tenderness for, and of whom he even travailed in birth again to see Christ formed in them;[v] he was even pained to see the accomplishment of his desires and hopes concerning them. How greatly did he *long after them all in the bowels of Christ Jesus*.[w] The Lord fill all his ministers with such a love as this to precious souls; that, as Titus did, we may walk in the same spirit, in the same steps, with blessed Paul; being willing and glad, as he was, to spend and to be spent for their good.[x]

[2.] These desires of the salvation of souls must be offered up to God in prayer. We must look up to God, and beg of him to pity and help those whom we pity, but cannot help without his grace, that are yet in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and to deliver them from going down to the pit. We bring them the means of grace; but we must look up to him for a blessing upon those means, and for grace to go along with them, to make them effectual. When as friends of the bridegroom, we court the affections of souls for him, that they may be espoused to him, we must do as Abraham's servant did, look up to heaven for success: *O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day*;[y] let the message of peace be entertained, and that faithful saying, which is so well worthy of all acceptation, be believed and accepted.

When we say, *Peace be unto you*, we mean, *The Lord of peace himself give you peace*, true peace, all peace, *always, by all means*;[z] that peace of God which will rule in your hearts,[a] and make them holy, and which will keep your hearts and minds,[b] and make them calm and easy. We can but *speak the words of peace*, it is God only who can *speak peace*, that can *create peace*, and in his hands therefore we leave the work. We do but go, as Gehazi, with Elisha's staff, which will not awake the dead child: nay, Elisha can but stretch himself upon the child; he must look up to the God of life for the spirit of life to enter into him.[c] We cannot by any power of our own make dead sinners alive, or drooping saints lively; we must therefore have our eyes up to the Lord, to *say unto them* "*Live*,"[d]—to say, as one having authority, (for *we* can only show our good will,) *Peace be unto you*.

[3.] It is good to let those we preach to know that we pray for them. We must not only say to God, *Peace be to this house*, but we must say it in the hearing of those that dwell in it. St. Paul, in his epistles, often tells his friends what those things were for which he prayed for them, that they might be encouraged to hope they should obtain those blessings in answer to his prayers, and might with the more boldness ask them of God for themselves. The blessings which Christ's ministers pronounce on the congregations of his people, is not to be thought lightly of, but to be reverently waited for, and gladly received, because God, in it, puts his name upon them.[e] And if we in faith say *Amen* to it, we may hope that God will, and then we are blessed indeed.

We should take all opportunities to make those we preach to sensible, how truly and earnestly desirous we are of their eternal peace and welfare; that, if possible, we may awaken them to a due concern about it, and convince them that we love them, which will very much facilitate the entertainment of our message. We should make it appear, even to those who turn a deaf ear to our calls, that nevertheless we dare not *sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for them*. Our Lord Jesus by his tears and good wishes testified his good will to Jerusalem, even when the things which belong to her peace were hid from her eyes.[f]

We now see our work, and something of the meaning of the words here put into our mouths; *Peace be to this house*, Peace be to this congregation. The Lord help us to carry them through all our preaching, and praying, with a sincere love to Christ and souls.

II. What the success of ministers is, and is likely to be, in their preaching and praying; what is the fruit of their labour, and what the effect of their going thus from place to place, speaking *peace* wherever they come, *peace and truth*.

As to themselves:—If they be faithful in the trust reposed in them, and their hearts upright with God in the discharge of it, whatever acceptance they and their message meet with among men, they are sure to be accepted of the Lord,[g] and that they are ambitious of, and labour for. *We are a sweet savour unto God in those that perish, as well as in those that are saved*,[h] if we be sincere in doing our part. Though we should not gain our point, yet we shall in no wise lose our reward; though it be not well succeeded, if it be said, "*Well done thou good and faithful servant*," we shall *enter into the joy of our Lord*.[i]

[a] Rom. x. 1. [v] Gal. iv. 19. [w] Phil. i. 1. [x] 2 Cor. xii. 15, 18
[y] Gen. xxiv. 12. [z] 2 Thess. iii. 16. [a] Col. iii. 15.
[b] Phil. iv. 7. [c] 2 Kings iv. 31, 34. [d] Ezek. xvi. 6. [e] Numb. vi. 27.
[f] Luke xix. 41. [g] 2 Cor. v. 9. [h] 2 Cor. ii. 15. [i] Matt. xxv. 21

Our Master himself, though as to the chosen remnant, he was sure to see of the travail of his soul[i] to his satisfaction; yet, as to others, he had recourse to this for his comfort, *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious.*[k] As we must deliver our message to those with whom we deal, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear,[l] so when we come to return an answer, if we have delivered it faithfully, we shall give up an account of ourselves with joy, though of many we give up our account with grief. Though Wisdom herself calls, and yet is refused, she will be justified of all her children,[m] and glorified of God; and so shall Wisdom's maidens. But,

As to those to whom we minister:—the success is varied; not the same with all. On some, the peace comes which we preach and pray for; on others, it does not. Some are the better for our preaching and praying: to them the word is a savour of life unto life,[n] of life spiritual unto life eternal; they are our comfort, and will be our crown. But others get no good at all by the instructions given them, and the pains we take with them; even the word of life is to them a savour of death unto death; instead of making them better it makes them worse, hardens their hearts, and aggravates their corruption, and so they are twice dead.[o] Those of the same family, the same fraternity, who have had the same education, have sitten under the same ministry, and have given to each other the right hand of fellowship, may yet experience the effects of the word thus vastly different. *Two in a bed together,—one taken* for life, *the other left* to perish.[p]

We are ready to think the case is so plain on religion's side, that with all to whom it is fairly stated it should of itself carry immediate conviction; that Christ and holiness have such beauty in them, without comparison, and without controversy, that all we preach to should presently be brought to be in love with them. But, alas, it is not so; after all, many do not believe our report;[q] nay, few in comparison do. As it was among Pharaoh's servants, some took the warning given of the impending plague of hail, and housed their cattle;[r] others did not, but left them in the field; so when St. Paul preached, some believed the things that were spoken,[s] but others believed not, though they were spoken with such convincing evidence. Thus it has been constantly from the days of the prophets unto this day; and thus *it will be:* the good seed of the word falls on some ground where it is lost and thrown away; on other, where it takes root and brings forth fruit. The preaching of Christ and the apostles, was acceptable and profitable to some, while others contradicted and blasphemed it. And if we see the like still, we are not to marvel at the matter.

2. It is unknown to us what the success of our ministry *will be*, and perhaps what it is. When the disciples were to say, *Peace be to this house*, they could not tell whether the Son of peace were there or no; nay, it may be when they became better acquainted with the house, yet they could not with certainty discover whether their peace did rest upon it, or no: *The Lord knoweth them that are his*,[t] but we do not. God did indeed assure Paul, for his encouragement to preach the gospel at Corinth, that he had much people in that city.[u] But, ordinarily, we cast the net into the sea, not knowing whether any thing will be enclosed; nay, oftentimes we toil all night, and catch nothing, when we promised ourselves a full draught.[v] And, on the other hand, after many disappointments, at Christ's word we let down the net, and enclose a great multitude.

Sometimes we meet not with the success we hoped for. Those who seemed very willing to hear us, yet we cannot persuade to heed us, nor to mix faith with what they hear. We are to them as a lovely song,[w] but that is all. Paul was called, by vision, to Macedonia; and yet, at his first coming, there appeared but a slender harvest to be gathered in. Nay, those with whom we thought we had gained our point, sometimes disappoint us, and prove not as we expected; the hopeful buds and blossoms are blasted, and no fruit is brought forth to perfection. Those who seemed enclosed in the gospel net, slip through again and are gone; and after they had escaped the corruption that is in the world, are again entangled therein, and overcome;[x] and forfeit the peace we hoped should have rested upon them. It was Christ's prerogative to know what was in men, and what they would prove.

Sometimes ministers have better success than they looked for. Nineveh repents at the preaching of Jonah; and the publicans and harlots were wrought on by John the Baptist's ministry, notwithstanding the great austerity of his conversation. The church has sometimes been herself surprised with the multitude of her converts, and has asked, *Who hath begotten those?*[y] *Who are these that fly as a cloud?*[z] The beginning perhaps was small, and as a grain of mustard seed; but the latter end greatly increases. The seed that seemed lost under the clods, springs up a great while after. One labours, and another enters into his labours;[a] one hand lays a foundation, and another builds upon it. John the Baptist was sent to *prepare* the way of the Lord, and much of the good effect of his ministry appeared when he was gone. Many a minister does more good than he thinks he does, more than he can know, and more than perhaps it is fit he should know. It will be all in good time to know what fish are enclosed

i Isa. liii. 11. k Isa. xlix. 5.
l Ezek. ii. 5. m Prov. i. 24. n 2 Cor. ii. 16.
o Jude 12. p Luke xvii. 34. q Isa. liii. 1.
r Exod. ix. 20. s Acts xxviii. 24. t 2 Tim. ii. 19.
u Acts xviii. 10. v Luke v. 5. w Ezek. xxxiii. 32.
x 2 Pet. ii. 20. y Isa. xlix. 21. z Isa. lx. 8. a John iv. 38.

in the net when it is brought to shore. There is a day in which the secrets of all hearts will be manifested; and let us judge nothing before that time.

3. The success of our ministry will be *according as people are.* So much is intimated in the text; according as the inhabitants are sons of peace, or not, accordingly our peace will, or will not, rest upon the house. The physic operates according to the constitution of the body; the same sun softens wax, and hardens clay; *recipitur ad modum recipientis—the effect depends upon the temper with which it is received.* The same parables which made divine truths more plain and familiar to those who were humble and willing to be taught,[b] made them more obscure to those who were proud and prejudiced, and willingly ignorant.[c] Christ himself is a precious stone to them who believe; but to them who be disobedient he is a stone of stumbling. There are scorners, who, when we have said all we can, will delight in scorning, and fools who will hate knowledge;[d] but there are Bereans, who are more noble and better disposed,[e] wise just men, who will receive instruction, and will be yet wiser, and increase in learning.[f] If our gospel be hid, it is hid from those whose minds Satan has blinded.[g] If it be revealed, it is to those who have the spirit of wisdom and understanding though they be but babes.[h]

4. The success of our ministry will be *as God pleases;* according as he gives, or withholds, his grace. The word of God, like the rain, shall accomplish that for which he sends it,[i] and causes it to come, *whether* (as Elihu says of the rain) *it be for correction, or for his land, or for mercy;*[k] but whatever errand it is sent upon, it shall not return to him void. If Lydia attend to the things that are spoken by Paul, it is not because *he* is an eloquent preacher, or because *she* is a considerate hearer, but because the Lord opens her heart.[l] *Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is God only that giveth the increase.*[m]

We have but the dispensing of the means of grace; and we must be careful and faithful in doing it; but we have not the dispensing of the grace which is necessary to make those means effectual; God reserves that in his own hand, and dispenses it according to his own pleasure, as it is fit he should, for it is his own. In this, our blessed Saviour himself acquiesced; and thereby has taught us to do so; *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*[n] *Hath not the potter power over the clay?*

As to our success:

(1.) The text gives us encouragement to hope, that some shall be the better for our praying and preaching; we shall meet with those who are sons of peace, who are disposed to submit to the commands, and qualified to partake of the privileges, of the gospel peace. As Wisdom is said to be justified by her children, so peace, to be welcomed by her sons; and on the houses where these sons of peace are, our Master does us the honour to tell us, that *our peace shall rest.* It is *his* peace; but he is pleased to call it *ours,* because we are concerned, in the first place, to make sure an interest in it ourselves; and because we are intrusted to make a tender of it to others. It is our peace, in the same sense that St. Paul calls the gospel *my gospel,*[o] because he was a minister and messenger of it. If the master of the family be a son of peace, your peace shall rest upon the whole house; they will all fare the better for his acceptance of your ministry; *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*[p] And the more diffusive your benign influences are, the more satisfaction it will be to you. We may comfort ourselves with this, as St. Paul does, that we so run, not as uncertainly, we so fight, not as those that beat the air;[q] though some reject our message, to others it will be acceptable; so that whatever our melancholy fears sometimes may be, we shall not labour in vain, nor spend our strength for nought and in vain. But,

Who are the sons of peace, on whose heads, and hearts, and houses, the blessings of peace shall come? I answer,

[1.] Those who are so by the designation of the divine counsel; the chosen of God, whom he hath set apart for himself to be vessels of mercy.[r] We read of those whom God has as his people, and whom Christ has as his sheep,[s] who are yet to be effectually called, and brought home. As a son of death is one destined to death, so a son of peace is one predestined to peace. The elect are sons of peace; for they are heirs of it, and were from eternity, in the covenant of redemption, given to Christ who is our peace, and the Prince of peace, to be his children, to bear his image, partake of his nature, and be under his tuition, and as such to be presented to the Father; *Behold I and the children which God has given me.*[t] *My peace I leave with you.* The covenant of peace between God and man, is grounded upon the counsel of peace which was between the Father and the Son[u] from eternity, concerning the salvation of the chosen remnant.

Now it is certain, that all who were given to Christ, shall come unto him, and none of them perish;[v] for he will be able to give a good account of them all in the great day, and none of them shall be missing. Therefore it is, that as many as were ordained to eternal life shall infallibly believe,[w] for the election shall obtain, though the rest be blinded,[x]

b Matt. xiii. 13, 16. c 1 Pet. ii. 7, 8. d Prov. i. 22.
e Acts xvii. 11. f Prov. ix. 9. g 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.
h Matt. xi. 25. i Isa. lv. 10, 11. k Job xxxvij. 13.
l Acts xvi. 14. m 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. n Luke x. 21.

o Rom. ii. 16. p Acts xvi. 31. q 1 Cor. ix. 26.
r Acts xviii. 10. s John x. 16. t Heb. ii. 13.
u Zech. xvii. 13. v John vi. 39, 40.
w Acts xiii. 48. x Rom. xi. 7.

because the foundation of God stands sure, and none of his purposes are abortive. Those whom God has ordained to glory shall be brought to it by the ordinary means of grace and peace; and ministers are sent in pursuance of that design, that the purpose of God according to election may stand.[y]

[2.] Those who are so by the operations of the divine grace. They are the sons of peace, in whom God has wrought a gracious readiness to admit the word of the gospel in the light and love of it; whose hearts are made soft to receive the impressions of it, so that they are turned as clay to the seal. Those come to Christ, and so come under the dominion of this peace, whom the Father draws[z] by preparing grace, and whom, though unwilling, he makes willing in the day of his power,[a] by opening their understandings, and making their hearts to burn within them; of which two great works of divine grace, one on the intellectual, the other on the active, powers of the soul, our Lord Jesus gave remarkable specimens while he was here upon earth, after his resurrection, Luke xxiv. 32, 45.

They are the sons of peace; that is, qualified to receive the comforts of the everlasting gospel; in whom there is a good work of grace wrought, that whereas they were by nature vain, and carnal, and worldly, are become serious, and holy, and heavenly; who are born again, born from above, and partake of a new nature. To those who are sanctified, and to those only, we are commissioned to speak peace. Therefore the apostolical benediction puts grace before peace; *Grace be unto you, and*, then, *peace*. Those only who have received the spirit of holiness, are entitled to the consolations of God.

(2.) Wherein shall those who are thus the sons of peace be the better for our ministry? We are here told, that our peace shall rest upon them, that is,

[1.] Our *prayers* for them shall be heard. And even with an eye to our prayers, and in answer to them, as well as to his own promises, and in performance of them, God will bestow upon them all that good which is necessary, and will be sufficient, to make them happy for ever and easy now. When we bespeak peace *for* them, God will speak peace *to* them, he will bless his people with peace;[b] will pay out the legacy which Christ has left, by his last will and testament, to all who are his disciples indeed, upon our suing it out for them,—even his peace.[c] This is an encouragement to us to pray particularly for good Christians who are troubled in mind, and are of a sorrowful spirit; and to be humbly earnest with God in prayer for them, when it may be they cannot with any confidence pray for themselves—that it is here promised that peace shall be given, to all those to whom it belongs, in answer to our prayers; so that the effectually fervent prayer of a righteous man may avail much:[d] and what a joy may it be to us, if we thus become helpers of the joy of the Lord's people! And though the answer of peace does not come quickly, we must continue to pray and wait, and hearken what God the Lord will speak; for, sooner or later, he will speak peace to his people and to his saints.[e] Light is sown for them,[f] and in due time it will come up in a harvest of joy, though it may be it was sown in tears.

When we pronounce the blessing of peace upon a *mixed* congregation,—as to them who are indeed the sons of peace, God will say *Amen* to the blessing, will put his *fiat—let it be done*, to it, "They are blessed and they shall be blessed." We pray for *all*,—God will hear us for those who are the *children* of the covenant, and the promise; as Abraham prays for Ishmael,[g] and God hears him for Isaac. As the hand of his wrath shall find out all his enemies;[h] so the hand of his grace and blessing shall find out all his friends, wherever they are, none of them shall be lost in the crowd.

[2.] Our *preaching* to them shall answer the end, and be effectual. If they be the sons of peace, the glad tidings of peace we bring shall instruct them, and increase their knowledge; shall invite them to Christ, and strengthen their faith in him; shall work upon their affections, and inflame their love to him; shall govern them, and influence their whole conversation; shall comfort them, and enlarge their hearts to run the way of God's commandments. Our peace shall come upon them as a light shining from heaven to guide their feet *into* the paths of peace, and *in* those paths; nay, it shall come upon them as power from on high, both to rule their hearts,[i] and give law to them; and to keep their hearts,[k] and give comfort to them. It shall come upon them, as the rain comes copiously upon the earth to water it: and they shall drink in this rain, and bring forth *herbs meet for them by whom they are dressed*.[l]

But O what a comfort is it, to be instrumental in furthering the holiness, and joy, of the sons of peace; in carrying the heirs of heaven forward toward their inheritance! Herein, we have the honour of *being workers together with God;* and as under shepherds, serving the gracious purposes of the chief Shepherd, who gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom.[m]

[3.] The fruit of *both* shall *remain*;[n] your peace shall not only come, but rest, upon the sons of peace, it shall continue with them, and they shall never lose the power and benefit of it; it is a good part which shall never be taken away[o] from those who have it; this peace shall take such deep rooting in

y Rom. ix. 11. z John vi. 44. a Ps. cx. 3.
b Ps. xxix. 11. c John xiv. 27. d James v. 16.
e Ps. lxxxv. 8. f Ps. xcvii. 11.
g Gen. xvii. 18, 19. h Ps. xxi. 8. i Col. iii. 15.
k Phil. iv. 7. l Heb. vi. 7. m Isa. xl. 11.
n John xv. 16. o Luke x. 42.

the soul that it shall never be extirpated; it shall be a well of living water which shall still spring up to life eternal.[o] Our Saviour encouraged his disciples with this, when he sent them forth into his harvest,—That they were gathering fruit unto life eternal;[p] in which both he who sows and they who reap shall for ever rejoice together.

(3.) The text also shows us that we ought not to be overmuch discouraged in our work, though there be many who are never the better for our praying and preaching. If the sons of peace be not among those to whom we bring the glad tidings of peace; if those to whom we minister be wilful and obstinate, and turn a deaf ear to the calls of the word, and will not hearken to the voice of the charmer; if we cannot fasten any thing upon them, to convince them of their folly in a sensual indulgence of the body, and a senseless neglect of their souls;—they who *were* filthy, are filthy still; and all the day long do we stretch out our hands in vain to a rebellious gainsaying people.

In this case, our own hearts suggest to us many sad thoughts: It is a temptation to us to question the credibility and acceptableness of the truths we preach, when there are so many who cannot be brought to entertain them, and submit to them; to question whether it be any advantage to have the oracles of God and the means of grace, and whether it were not as good be without them, since to so many who have them they are in vain. But we have ready an answer to this temptation, *What if some did not believe?* (Nay, what if many did not?) *Shall their unbelief* invalidate the covenant of grace and peace, and *make the truth of God of none effect? God forbid!*[q] We are told, previously, that so it would be; and, therefore, it ought not to be a stumbling-block to us. And the reason why they do not believe, and are not sons of peace, is not because there wants any thing to recommend this peace to them, but because their minds are *blinded* by the love of the world and the lusts of the flesh, and they will not come to Christ for eye-salve, will not come to him that they might have life.[r]

It is likewise a temptation to us to question, Whether we have the presence of God with us in our ministry, or no? We are ready to say, as Gideon did, *If the Lord be with us, where are all the wonders that our fathers told us of?*[s] the wonders that were wrought by the powers of the word, in casting down imaginations, and bringing high thoughts into obedience to Christ:[t] we now see not such signs; there are no more any converts; or, very few like the grape-gleanings of the vintage.

As to this, the text intimates that which may encourage us, and give us satisfaction. If we meet with those who are not the sons of peace,

[1.] It is true that our peace shall not come, or rest, upon them, as it does upon them who are the sons of peace; our prayers are not heard for them. We know not who have sinned unto death, while there is life there is hope, and therefore we are to pray for the worst; but if we did know, concerning any, as certainly as Samuel did concerning Saul, that God had rejected them, we should have very little reason to pray for them. *There is a sin*, a sinner, *unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it.*[u] Our preaching speaks no comfort to them; for we are to separate between the precious and the vile. And at the same time we say, *God has redeemed his servant Jacob*, and *they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts*, we must add, yet *there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.*[v] When this blessing is pronounced upon the congregation, those in it who are not the sons of peace have no part or lot in the matter,[w] it is not designed for them. *Behold*, my servants *shall eat, but* ye *shall be hungry.*[x] It is true, that grace and peace shall be with them all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;[y] but it is as true, that if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, he is, and shall be, *anathema: maran-atha—accursed: the Lord comes.*[z] The blessing that rests upon the sons of peace shall never come upon the sons of Belial.

In God's name I therefore testify, to all who hear me this day, If you do not submit your souls to the sanctifying, commanding power of the gospel truths, they speak, they bring, no peace to you. You have no right to the blessings of the covenant, nor can lay any claim to its comforts, unless you come up to the terms of the covenant, and come under the bonds of it. Those and those only shall find rest for their souls[a] in Christ, who are willing to take his yoke upon them. You have many excellent ministers, and a great deal of lively, serious, powerful preaching; you have precept upon precept, and line upon line: but all this will bring no peace to you, if you continue under the power of a vain and carnal mind,—nay, it will but aggravate your condemnation another day.

We dare not speak peace to those to whom the God of heaven does not speak peace; nor tell those who go on still in their trespasses, they shall have peace notwithstanding; we should be false to God and your souls if we did. However you may flatter yourselves, we dare not flatter you, in a sinful way; we have not seen visions of peace for you, and therefore must not speak words of peace to you. To what purpose would it be to *daub a wall with untempered mortar*,[b] which would soon fall and bury you, and us too, in the ruins of it? We must say to every impenitent sinner, as Jehu did to Joram's messenger, *What hast thou to do with peace?*[c] True peace

[o] John iv. 14. [p] John iv. 36. [q] Rom. iii. 3. [r] John v. 40. [s] Jud. vi. 13. [t] 2 Cor. x. 5. [u] 1 John v. 16. [v] Isa. xlviii. 20—22. [w] Acts viii. 21. [x] Isa. xlv. 13. [y] Eph. vi. 24. [z] 1 Cor. xvi. 22. [a] Matt. xi. 29. [b] Ezek. xiii. 10, 16. [c] 2 Kings ix. 18.

thou canst not have without holiness. Be willing therefore, and obedient; and now at length, in this thy day, understand the *things which belong to thy peace*; for, (blessed be God!) yet, they are not hid from thine eyes.

[2.] The peace that does not find sons of peace to rest upon shall turn to us again. And this ought to satisfy us; as it quieted David, when he prayed for his persecutors, that though his kindness did not work upon them, nor were his prayers heard for them perhaps, yet they returned into his own bosom.[d]

Our peace shall turn to us; that is,

(1.) We shall have the comfort of having done our duty to God, in discharge of our trust; and of having done our part toward their salvation, in love to their souls. This will be peace to us, though it be not peace to them. Abundance of peace we may have in our own bosoms, if we have the testimony of our consciences for us, that we have dealt plainly with them, have given them fair warning of their misery and danger by reason of sin, have said again and again, *O wicked man, thou shalt surely die*;[e] have endeavoured to open to them the remedial law of repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; and have not wilfully kept back any thing that was profitable to them;[f] though we have piped to them and they have not danced, have mourned unto them, and they have not lamented.[g] We have done what we could, to frighten them from sin with the terrors of the law, and to allure them to Christ with the comforts of the gospel; but all in vain, they have not been wrought upon either by the one or by the other: yet their infidelity and obstinacy shall be no bar to our acceptance with God, who will have an eye to our sincerity, not to our success.

This peace will be our peace still, if we have some good hope, through grace, that though we cannot prevail with others to come to Christ, yet we have ourselves an interest in him; that we shall save ourselves, though we save not all who hear us;[h] that whatever becomes of them, we shall not be cast away at last. If *others* be not the better for our labours, the peace may return to ourselves, if we be the better; for we preach to ourselves, and must edify ourselves; and the less good we think we do to others' souls, the more good let us endeavour to get to our own souls, and then take the comfort of it. When those disciples returned, to whom Christ gave these instructions in the text, though they had had wonderful success, even beyond their own expectation, yet Christ directs them to rejoice more in the assurances they themselves had of their own bliss, than in their triumphs over Satan in others: *In this rejoice not, that the devils are subject to you, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*[i] And this cause for joy every faithful minister has, though he has not the success he wishes for.

(2.) We shall have commission to go on in our work notwithstanding. Our peace shall turn to us again; not only to be enjoyed by ourselves, but to be bestowed upon others, and communicated to them, to the next we meet with who are sons of peace. If one will not be wrought upon, it is to be hoped another will. Though many disbelieve our report, yet all do not; there are some who will bid it welcome. Though the body of the Jewish nation rejected the gospel of Christ, yet *at this present time*,[k] (says the apostle,) when the ferment is at the highest, and the opposition given to the gospel is most violent, yet *there is a remnant according to the election of grace*, a remnant even of that nation, who are sons of peace. And when the Jews thrust the kingdom of God away from them by their unbelief, the Gentiles embraced it with both arms. The peace which the apostles made a tender of to them, but they refused, was still in their hands, to carry to the Gentiles: *Lo, we turn to them.*[l]

It is indeed a temptation to us, when our message is slighted, to say, We will go no more on this errand; as Jeremiah was ready to say, when his ministry was ridiculed, *I will not make mention of the Lord, nor speak any more in his name*:[m] but we must never yield to any temptation of this kind, for woe unto us, if we preach not the gospel, *as we have opportunity*, whatever the issue be. If men will not hear us, our God will; and will crown humble, honest labours in his service with comfort and glory, though they should not be crowned with any remarkable success.

(3.) We shall be witnesses against those who refuse so fair an offer. Our peace shall return to us again, as the summons is returned to the officer, if the party summoned is not to be found, that it may be produced in evidence, that he was legally summoned. The gospel is a testimony *to* us;[n] but if we receive it not, it will be a testimony *against* us.[o] And the ministers of that gospel, who now follow you with importunity from day to day, beseeching you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, but all in vain, will give up a sad account concerning you; and you will be upbraided with all the pains they have taken among you; it will all be brought into the account, with a "*Son remember*;" that will enhance the reckoning, and inflame the torment. The servant who was sent to invite the guests to the wedding supper, when he met with a repulse, came and showed his lord all these things.[p] Ministers bring in an account of the fruit of their labours. While the sons of peace will be their joy and crown of rejoicing, those who continue in a state of enmity will be for ever struck speechless by their testi-

d Psalm xxxv. 13. e Ezek. xxxiii. 8. f Acts xx. 20, 21. g Matt. xi. 17. h 1 Tim. iv. 16. i Luke x. 20.

k Rom. xi. 3. l Acts xiii. 46. m Jer. x. 9. n Matt. xxiv. 14. o Matt. x. 18. p Luke xiv. 21.

mony against them: "Lord, we called, but they refused; we warned them, day and night, with tears, but they stiffened their necks and hardened their hearts, and sent us away grieved." Many a time they complained of it at the throne of grace, and it made their work go on heavily upon their hands, their souls wept in secret for it; but when they shall testify it before the throne of judgment, they will awfully applaud and acquiesce in the sentence past upon them, and be content to see them perish.

Let us now make some application of all briefly.

1. Let this awaken us who are ministers to be faithful, and serious, and diligent *in* delivering our message; as those who are in some measure sensible of the vast importance of the work we are employed in, and the dispensation that is committed to us. O that I could stir up my own heart, and yours, duly to consider the inestimable value of that treasure which is lodged in us, though we are but earthen vessels;[q] that peace which we are to bring in God's name to mankind; those talents with which we are to trade till our Lord comes. Let us think who we are in trust for: for Christ and his honour, and the interests of his kingdom among men; for precious souls, and their everlasting welfare. We deal in matters of life and death; O let our care and zeal be proportionable; and let us make a business of our ministry, let us wait upon it,[r] and give ourselves wholly to it,[s] as those who must give account,—that our Lord when he comes may find us doing, *so* doing.

If we be unskilful, and know not how to divide the word of truth and peace aright;[t] if we be unfaithful, and soothe men up in their sins, or any way handle the word of God deceitfully, seeking our own things more than the things of Christ; if we be slothful, and unwilling to take pains, not affected ourselves with the great things of God with which it is our business to affect others; if we be lifeless and careless in praying and preaching, and defeat the end of the matter of both by the slight manner of the performance;—we shall have a great deal to answer for another day. If the watchmen do not give warning, or not so that it is likely to be heard or heeded, the sinners will perish; but their blood will be required at the watchmen's hands.[u]

And let us remember that we are to bring peace with us in all our ministrations, that peace of God which passeth all conception and expression; and therefore we ought to apply ourselves to that business, and not meddle with things that belong not to us. We are ambassadors of peace; let us not then sow discord, nor foment divisions; for if we do, we contradict our character, and forfeit the honour of it. Let us be at peace among ourselves, and covet the blessedness of those who are peace-makers.

2. Let us, when we have done what we can, look up to God for the success. We ought earnestly to desire that our labour may not be in vain, and to be in care that nothing may be wanting on our part, in order to the good effect of it; we should do more good if we were but more solicitous to do good, and set ourselves to devise things proper for that end, to choose out words wherewith to reason with people about their souls. But still we must depend upon the blessing of heaven for their success; and must be earnest in prayer for that blessing. We can but speak to the ear, it is God only that can teach the heart, and seal the instruction there.

When we go to study, let us pray to God to put a word into our mouth that shall suit the case, and reach the consciences, of those to whom we are to speak; to direct us both in the choice and management of our subjects, to fill our hands, (as the Hebrew phrase for consecration,) that we may fill the people's hearts, when we go to preach. Still we need help from heaven to deliver our message as becomes the oracles of God; with purity, gravity, and sincerity; with an air of tenderness and humility, as those who know the worth of souls, and our own unworthiness; and yet with an air of assurance, as those who are confident of the truth of what we say, and who know whom we have trusted. When we have preached, we have but sown the seed; still we must look up to God to water it, and to give to every seed its own body. When we proceed to pray, we must fetch in the influences of the blessed Spirit, to help us against our praying infirmities. Nay, we must look up to God for a blessing upon every word of advice, reproof, and comfort that we give, that it may answer the end.

And as we are to pray for the success of our own endeavours, so likewise we must be earnest with God in prayer for the concurrence of his grace with the labours of others. Thus we *must* help one another; and thus we *may*, though we are at a great distance from each other, and cannot otherwise be helpful. When the apostle forbids wishing "good speed" to those who bring any other doctrine,[v] it is intimated, that it was usual with the primitive Christians and ministers to bid those "God speed" who brought the true doctrine of Christ. Those who labour in Christ's harvest should be prayed for, as of old the reapers were, by them who passed by; *The blessing of the Lord be upon you; we bless you in the name of the Lord.*[w] God speed the gospel-plough!

3. Let us be very careful that we do not, by any irregularity in our conversation, hinder the success of our praying and preaching, and defeat the ends of them. If we be proud and vain, and loose in our walking; if we be intemperate, and indulgent of the flesh; if we be covetous, selfish, and worldly; if we be contentious, peevish, and passionate; or if any corrupt communication proceed out of our

q 2 Cor. iv. 10. r Rom. xii. 7. s 1 Tim. iv. 15. t 2 Tim. ii. 15. u Ezek. xxxiii. 6. v 2 John 10. w Ps. cxxix. 8.

mouth;—we pull down with one hand what we build up with the other; and not only tempt people, but even force them, to think, that we *ourselves* do not believe what we would persuade them to believe; and when we appear most serious in our public performances, do but act a part, and talk thus only because it is our trade: we do also provoke God to withdraw his presence from us, and to say, as he does of those prophets who walk not in his counsels, *They shall not profit this people at all.*[x]

Let our conversation be not only blameless and harmless, but exemplary for every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy; thus let our light shine, that others may be taught, and guided and quickened, by it. Then may we hope it shall be with us as it was with Levi of old, who, while he walked with God in peace and equity, turned many away from iniquity.[y]

4. What success of our labours we have the comfort of, let God have all the glory of. Do we meet with any of those to whom we minister in holy things, who are awakened to a concern about their souls and eternity, and are asking the way to *Zion* with their faces thitherward?[z] Are there any of the children we have catechized who hold fast the form of sound words in faith and love, and have we the satisfaction of seeing them walk in the truth? When we look into the vineyards we are made the keepers of, do we find that the vines do in any measure flourish, and the tender grapes appear;[a] that the souls we watch over prosper and are in health? We cannot but rejoice herein, rejoice greatly; yet let us rejoice with humility; for I am sure we have nothing to be proud of, nothing to boast of, but a great deal to be ashamed of, and great reason to admire God's gracious condescension, that he is pleased thus far to own us, to honour us, though most unworthy. Let us rejoice with thankfulness, with many thanksgivings to God, whose strength is perfected in weakness, and his praise ordained out of the mouth of babes and sucklings. St. Paul, in his epistles, gives thanks to God for those churches that he had comfort in, and hopes of.

But let us rejoice with trembling, lest those whom we think espoused as chaste virgins to Christ should yet be beguiled, as Eve was, by the subtilty of the tempter; and let us always be jealous over them, as Paul was over his friends, with a godly jealousy,[b] lest it should prove at last we have bestowed upon them labour in vain.[c]

5. What disappointments we meet with, let us bear them patiently. Let us inquire whether we have not been wanting in our duty, and be humbled for our defects, and acknowledge that the Lord is righteous. St. Paul owns, that by the miscarriages of those among whom he had laboured, his God humbled him among them;[d] and the same good use we should make of the same trial, let it help to hide pride from us, and oblige us to depend upon the sufficiency of divine grace, and not upon any thing in ourselves, for without Christ we can do nothing.

When we suspect we do little good, yet let it be a comfort to us that we are going on in the way of our duty; that we are presiding in solemn religious assemblies, *from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another*, and so are serving Christ and his glory in the world. Good may be in operation, and we not aware of it; the gospel works like leaven, silently and insensibly;[e] and like the seed cast into the ground, which grows up (we know not how) while we sleep, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.[f] Nor let it be any uneasiness to us, that we are kept in doubt and in the dark concerning the success of our labours. When the net is drawn to shore we shall see what is enclosed; what good fish, and what bad:[g] and let us judge nothing before the time; the great day will clear all, and we must wait till then.

But if there be those whose sins go before unto judgment, who manifestly hate to be reformed, and will go on frowardly in the way of their heart; though we cannot but look upon them many a time with a sad heart, yet in this we must be satisfied, that *God will be glorified:* if God be not honoured by them, he will get him honour upon them, as he did on Pharaoh. They to whom our labour is in vain are not sons of peace; and, therefore, it should not be expected that our peace should rest upon them; Christ will see his seed, and we must not think to see any other for ours. If divine mercy be not glorified in their salvation, divine justice will be glorified in their destruction; and they will have nothing to say for themselves, nor will their ministers have any thing to say for them: the dresser of the vineyard who had interceded for the barren fig-tree, will be pleased, if at length it bear fruit, but if not, he gives it up, *Then after that thou shalt cut it down.*[h]

*To conclude:* Let this be an awakening word to all of you. You are, in this world, probationers for eternity; accordingly as you are, now, sons of peace or not, it is likely to be with you for ever. Are your ministers desirous to have their peace rest upon you, and are not you desirous of it? Are they in care about your souls, and will not you be in care about them? You have life and death, good and evil, set before you: choose life, that you may live, may live for ever. But if you will not come up to the terms of peace, but will perish in your rebellion, you cannot say but you have had fair warning given you of the consequences of it, so that your watchmen have delivered their souls, and left your blood to lie upon your own heads.

x Jer. xxiii. 32. y Mal. ii. 6. z Jer. l. 5.
a Cant. vii. 12. b 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. c 1 Thess. iii. 5.
d 2 Cor. xii. 21. e Matt. xiii. 33. f Mark iv. 26—28.
g Matt. xiii. 48. h Luke xiii. 19.

# A SERMON

ON

# THE PROMISES OF GOD.

PREACHED MAY THE 7TH, 1710.

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2 COR. vii. 1.

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

IT is the unspeakable privilege of all believers to have, as a certain possession, the precious promises of God. But under what notion have we the promises of God?

1. We have them as manifest tokens of God's favour towards us; and every one of them are yea, amen, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. We have them as fruits of Christ's purchase. The Lord having purchased us with his own blood, we have these promises produced by that inestimable grace.

3. They are plain and ample declarations of the good-will of God towards men, and therefore as God's part of the covenant of grace.

4. They are a foundation of our faith, and we have them as such; and also of our hope, on these we are to build all our expectations from God; and in all temptations and trials we have them to rest our souls upon.

5. We have them as the directions and encouragements of our desires in prayer. Seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Wherefore they are the guide of our desires, and the ground of our hope in prayer.

6. We have them as the means by which the grace of God works for our holiness and comfort, for by these we are made partakers of a divine nature, and faith, applying these promises, is said to work by love.

7. We have the promises as the earnest and assurance of future blessedness. By these eternal life and glory is secured to all true believers.

And now, having observed these things, let us review the blessed promises of God; and

The first is,—He hath promised that we shall be his people.

The Scripture,—*Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine,* Exod. xix. 5.

The second promise,—That all our sins shall be pardoned.

*I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,* Isa. xliii. 25.

The third,—That our corruptions shall be subdued.

*For sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace,* Rom. vi. 14.

The fourth,—That the Spirit of grace shall be given us, to enable us for our duty in every thing.

*I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them,* Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

The fifth,—That God will put it particularly into our hearts, or circumcise our hearts to love him.

*The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live,* Deut. xxx. 6.

The sixth,—That he will give us the knowledge of his truth, and the comfort and the benefit of it.

*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,* John viii. 32.

The seventh,—That he will unite our hearts to himself and to each other.

*I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them and of their children after them,* Jer. xxxii. 39.

The eighth,—That he will be tender of those that are weak.

*He shall feed his flock like a Shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young,* Isa. xl. 11.

The ninth,—That he will direct us in the way of our duty.

*Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he teach sinners in the way. The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way,* Ps. xxv. 8, 9.

The tenth,—That he will protect us from every thing that is really evil.

*The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore,* Psa. cxxi. 7, 8.

The eleventh,—That he will supply us with all good.

*The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing,* Ps. xxxiv. 10.

The twelfth,—That he will answer our prayers.

*Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son,* John xiv. 13.

The thirteenth,—That he will silence our fears.

*I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee,* Isa. xli. 13.

The fourteenth,—That he will bear us up under our burthens.

*The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms,* Deut. xxxiii. 27.

The fifteenth,—That he will give us a sure and lasting peace.

*The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever,* Isa. xxxii. 17.

The sixteenth,—That he will admit us into fellowship and communion with himself.

*Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple,* Ps. lxv. 4.

The seventeenth,—That he will give us the comfortable enjoyment of ourselves.

*His soul shall dwell at ease; and his seed shall inherit the earth,* Ps. xxv. 13.

The eighteenth,—That he will deliver us in and under our troubles.

*Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him,* Ps. xci. 14, 15.

The nineteenth,—That he will affect us in measure and in mercy, when we have need of it.

*I will be his Father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee,* 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15.

The twentieth,—That he will spare us with the tenderness of a fatherly compassion.

*They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,* Malachi iii. 17.

The twenty-first,—That he will not persist in his controversy with us.

*I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made,* Isa. lvii. 16.

The twenty-second,—That he will speak comfort to us when we are in sorrow.

*I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly,* Ps. lxxxv. 8.

The twenty-third,—That he will proportion our trials to our strength.

*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,* 1 Cor. x. 13.

The twenty-fourth,—That he will put true honour upon us.

*Them that honour me I will honour,* 1 Sam. ii. 30.

The twenty-fifth,—That he will feed us with food convenient for us.

*Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed,* Ps. xxxvii. 3.

The twenty-sixth,—That he will clear up our injured reputation.

*He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day,* Ps. xxxvii. 6.

The twenty-seventh,—That he will comfort and relieve us in sickness.

*The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness,* Ps. xli. 3.

The twenty-eighth,—That he will prevent our apostasy from him.

*I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me,* Jer. xxxii. 40.

The twenty-ninth,—That he will make all events conduce to our real welfare.

*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,* Rom. viii. 28.

The thirtieth,—That he will perfect the work of grace in us.

*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,* Phil. i. 6.

The thirty-first,—That he will be with us when we are old, to bear us up under all our infirmities.

*Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you*, Isa. xlvi. 4.

The thirty-second,—That he will never desert us in any exigence whatsoever.

*For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*, Heb. xiii. 5.

The thirty-third,—That he will give us victory over our spiritual enemies.

*The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly*, Rom. xvi. 20.

The thirty-fourth,—That he will recompense our charity to the poor.

*He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again*, Prov. xix. 17.

The thirty-fifth,—That he will make up all our losses for his name's sake.

*Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life*, Matt. xix. 29.

The thirty-sixth,—That he will let us live long enough in this world, and give us a comfortable prospect of a better.

*With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation*, Ps. xci. 16.

The thirty-seventh,—That he will be with us when we come to die.

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me*, Ps. xxiii. 4.

The thirty-eighth,—That he will receive our souls into the arms of his love.

*But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah!* Ps. xlix. 15.

The thirty-ninth,—That he will take care of our posterity when we are gone.

*The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee*, Ps. cii. 28.

The fortieth,—That he will raise our bodies to life again.

*This is the will of him that sent me, That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day*, John vi. 40.

The forty-first,—That he will own us in the judgment of the great day.

*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven*, Matt. x. 32.

The forty-second,—That he will put us into possession of everlasting bliss.

*And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life*, 1 John ii. 25.

REPETITION TEXT.

*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

And now what shall we say to these things?

I.—1. Let us be thankful to God for all these great and precious promises, that God should not only do us good, but engage himself by promises to do so.

2. Let us be ashamed of ourselves that we have not lived more upon these promises.

3. Let us encourage ourselves with these promises to go on cheerfully and resolutely in the way of our duty.

4. Let us acknowledge the truth of God, and his faithfulness to his promises. *There hath not failed one word of all his good promise, &c.* 1 Kings viii. 56.

5. We are concerned to treasure up these promises, that we may have them ready to use when we have occasion for them, to silence our fears, and to strengthen our faith.

6. Behold, what need we have to live by faith, through which, and by which, we make use of these promises. God gives by promise that we may take by faith; therefore set about that work, and be much in the exercise of it.

II. Here is our duty inferred from this privilege. Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit: by which is understood,

1. We must abhor that which is evil, and abandon all sin with an holy detestation.

2. We must cleave to that which is good; we must perfect holiness in the fear of God. Observe, The consideration of God's promises to us should strongly engage us against all sin, and to all duty. To show you what strength there is in this argument taken from the promises, to abhor that which is evil, observe, (1.) We are bound in gratitude to please him who has given us so many, so great and precious, promises, Ps. cxvi. 12. What shall I render? Oh, how great is his goodness which he hath laid up for them that fear him! God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice, Ps. cviii. 7. Observe, (2.) We forfeit the benefit of God's promises if we do not make conscience of, and endeavour to keep, his commands. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it, Heb. iv. 1.

III. We are taught the blessed fruits of these promises.

1. These promises furnish us with strength and grace sufficient against sin, and for duty. Turn you at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you.

2. These promises speak the language of Caleb and Joshua, who said, We are well able to overcome

the people, when they are about to enter into Canaan; while the other spies discouraged the tribes. Thus we may say, through the strength of divine grace, we shall be well enabled to overcome all our spiritual enemies, namely, the world, flesh, and devil, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Observe it.

3. God is faithful to these promises which he has made to us. Therefore we must not be false to those promises which we have made to him, Heb. x. 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised.

4. In having these promises we have great honour put upon us, and we ought to carry it as becomes us. God has promised to be to us a faithful God, a loving, a tender Father. Let us not wander out of the way of duty. If we have received the promise, as Abraham did, we ought to do some great act, in our obedience to his commands, as he did.

5. The promises secure to us an abundant reward for our obedience; therefore let us be stedfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

And now having observed these things concerning the promises, let us explain fully the duty which is inferred. It contains two parts,

I. To be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

II. To perfect holiness in the fear of God.

I. We must be cleansed, &c.

1. Therefore let us look upon sin as filthiness; let the grace of God, and the purity, not only of his nature, but also of his word and promises, make sin more odious and terrible than in the threatenings it appears dangerous. In the promises, sin appears loathsome, and filthiness itself. For, observe, (1.) It is odious to God, contrary to that purity of nature which appears in his promises, which should deter us from sin, Jer. xliv. 4. Oh! do not this abominable thing that I hate, Gen. xxxix. 9. How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God! Observe, (2.) Look upon sin as that which unfits us for communion with God; therefore, upon this account, let sin become odious to us. Observe, (3.) Sin in Scripture is called and compared to a wound, to a plague, to leprosy, &c. and all to make us fear and loathe it.

2. Let us cleanse ourselves from this filthiness, by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is he that is made to us both righteousness and sanctification. It is our duty to cleanse ourselves, but we cannot do this without God's grace, and he will not do it without our endeavours. This implies, (1.) That we truly repent of the sins which we have committed, and loathe ourselves for them. Whenever we go to worship God, we must lie down in our shame, and abhor ourselves, repenting in dust and ashes. (2.) That by faith we apply the blood of Christ to our consciences, and sprinkle them with it, and that we wash in that fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. We read that the Ammonites made themselves odious in the nostrils of David, and so they hardened themselves, that is, strengthened themselves, against him. Let us not act so against God, but let us lie low before the Lord, and make the Lord Jesus Christ our friend to reconcile us to God.

3. Let us mortify the habits of sin, and purge out the old leaven, both in the head and in the heart. Get clear of our bad principles, that we may not make so light of sin as we have done; cleanse ourselves from corrupt fancy, cleanse ourselves from all filthiness that is in the imagination. Great pains must be taken with the heart, to get it clear of all corrupt inclinations. Wash ye, make ye clean, indulge no evil thoughts in your hearts.

4. Let us watch against all occasions of sin, that is, all those things by which you have contracted pollutions. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Keep at a distance from every thing which has the appearance of evil.

5. Let us resolve for the future to have no more to do with sin. Refrain from all acts of sin. Let him that has stole steal no more, Eph. iv. 28. Let him that has been drunk or unclean, be so no more, Isa. iv. 4. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning, that is, by a saving knowledge of, and a sincere love to, God and his commandments, submit to the Spirit's influences, or you will never get the mastery over your sins and corruptions. Therefore you must put on a holy resolution, and take the kingdom of heaven by violence, for the violent take it by force.

6. Our care herein must be universal. We must cleanse ourselves, (1.) from all filthiness of the flesh, from slothfulness and the love of ease, from sensuality and the love of pleasure, from gratifying the desires of the body with forbidden fruit, or indulging them too much, to the damage of the soul; for even lawful pleasures may turn into sin without due care and watchfulness over ourselves, such as gluttony, drunkenness, or seventh-commandment sins. (2.) We must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the spirit; from pride, covetousness, and the love of the world, from fraud, deceit, and injustice, Job xxxi. 7. from all sinful anger, malice, hatred, and desire of revenge; for these are spiritual filthinesses, from all which we must be cleansed.

II. We must perfect holiness in the fear of God.

1. We must be holy.

That is taken for granted; for we cannot perfect holiness unless we begin it. We must be holy. What is that? (1.) We must be devoted to God, as

all holy persons and things under the law were. We must be holiness to the Lord. (2.) We must be conformed to God's likeness, and to his will. God's holiness is his agreement with himself; our holiness is our agreeableness to him. We must act in every thing as becomes our relation to God, Col. i. 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, &c. and the image of God must be renewed upon us; be ye holy, saith the Lord, for I am holy. (3.) We must be employed in the services and worship of God; we must engage our hearts in all our approaches to him; we must employ our minds, and all the powers of our souls, in all the inward acts of inward worship, and in all outward worship also we must not only bow the knee, but also the heart, before the Lord; for heartless worship is vain worship, God will not accept it, and we ourselves shall be no gainers by it, so it must be in vain. (4.) We must be engaged in the interests of God's kingdom amongst men. To be holy, is to be on the Lord's side, and to espouse his cause, to be his witnesses, to be courageous and valiant for the truth, to contend earnestly for it, for great is the truth and it shall prevail; God will own and honour those that do own and honour him.

2. We must be sincere in our holiness, or perfecting holiness. For sincerity is our gospel perfection, as a good man said. I know no religion but sincerity, this is uprightness. Walk before me and be thou upright. By this is understood, (1.) We must be sanctified throughout. The whole man must be sanctified. The understanding must be enlightened, the will bowed and brought into obedience to the will of God, both to the will of his precepts to do them, and to the will of his providences to submit to them; and thus we stand complete in the whole will of God, that we may be sanctified in body, soul, and spirit, and so be perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2.) The whole law of God must be regarded, and a respect had to it. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments, Ps. cxix. 6. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes that I be not ashamed, *v.* 80. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way, *v.* 128. O let us labour to be sincere to the day of Christ, like good and faithful servants waiting for the coming of the Lord.

3. We must be growing and making progress in holiness; though we cannot perfect it in this world, yet we must be perfecting it, that is, adding a greater degree to a lesser, pressing forwards towards perfection. (1.) The habits of grace must grow more confirmed and rooted, our resolutions against sin more settled, and our resolution for God and duty more steady. This is to perfect what is lacking in our faith, 1 Thess. iii. 10. (2.) The actings of grace must grow more and more vigorous and lively. We must be more ready for every good work. We must have more spiritual success in a lively exercise to resist sin, and all temptations that would insnare us. (3.) We must be more and more watchful, and upon our guard. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Therefore be not high minded, but fear, Rom. xi. 20. We must never think ourselves good enough, and safe enough, but must be still growing wiser and better. (4.) We must be actuated and animated therein by the fear of God. That is, [1.] We must keep up a constant worship of God in our families, and in our closets; we must be frequent in holy adorings and admirings of God. This will be a good means of perfecting holiness, to be in the fear of the Lord every day, and all the day long. [2.] We must maintain a reverent regard to his majesty and authority, and this will keep us from sin; when others make bold with sin, we must stand in awe of God, as Nehemiah did, *ch.* v. 15. But so did not I, because of the fear of God. 3. We must have a continual dread of his wrath and vindictive justice. A fear of God's wrath and displeasure will be a means of keeping ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

To conclude. The apostle directs his exhortation to his dearly beloved, so do I to you, my dearly beloved.

1. Apply the promises to yourselves, live upon them, take them to be your heritage for ever. Both you that are young, and you that are old, treasure up the promises. 2. Apply the precepts to yourselves, and live up to them, and be holy in all manner of conversation. Keep a conscience always void of offence both towards God and towards man.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, Acts xx. 32. And may you be always looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, till you come to be for ever with him. Amen.

# DISPUTES REVIEWED:

IN

# A SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE EVENING LECTURE, AT SALTERS HALL, ON LORD'S DAY, JULY 23RD, 1710.

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MARK IX. 33.

——*What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?*

OUR Lord Jesus is here calling his disciples to an account about a warm debate they happened to have among themselves, as they travelled along, upon a question often started, but not yet determined, *Which of them should be the greatest?* They thought no other but that their Master should shortly enter upon the possession of a temporal kingdom, and all the pomp and grandeur of it, and they should be preferred with him; but they could not agree who should be prime-minister of state, and have the first post of honour. It is a sad instance of the remainders of corruption in the hearts even of good people; and shows that pride, ambition, and affectation of worldly honour, are sins that do most easily beset even Christ's own disciples; which, therefore, we should all carefully watch and strive against.

Probably our Lord Jesus overheard some words that passed in this dispute; for those who are hot upon an argument are apt to speak louder than becomes them; and when the temper is not kept within due bounds, commonly the voice is not. But whether he overheard them or no, he knew very well what they had been talking of, and every word that had been said, and, which was more than any *man* could know, from what principle it was said, and what more they would have said; for as there is not a word in our tongue, so there is not a thought in our heart, though newly risen and started there, though industriously suppressed and stifled there, but he knows it altogether.[a] He is that essential, eternal Word of God, who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and before whom all things are naked and open.[b] Let all the churches take notice of this, That our Lord Jesus not only knows our work, but is he who searches the reins and hearts.[c]

And yet, though Christ knew what his disciples had been talking of, he asked them what it was, because he would know it from *them*, and would have them to confess their fault and folly in it; that from thence he might take occasion to rectify their mistakes, and to instruct and reason them into a better temper.

Think not that my design from this text is to arraign, examine, or inquire into any disputes or contests that may be among you, of any kind; for as (blessed be God) I know of no *particular* occasion for it, nor have any thing else in my eye, in the choice of this subject, but what is *common to all*; so if there were, I should think myself the unfittest man in the world to be a judge or a divider. And besides, if I should thus go about to take my Master's work out of his hands, I should contradict that which is my design—in putting this question to you, *What was it that you disputed among yourselves by the way?*—and that is, to show you that our blessed Lord Jesus does and will inquire into these matters, and bind you over to his judgment.

Four things this text teaches us, who are all in profession *disciples* of Christ, as we are baptized Christians.

I. That we must all expect to be called to an account by our Lord Jesus.

II. That we must, in a particular manner, be called to an account about our discourses among ourselves.

III. That, among our discourses, we shall especially be called to an account about our disputes.

IV. That, of all our disputes, we shall be most strictly reckoned with for our disputes about precedency and superiority.

I. We must all expect to be called to an account

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a Ps. cxxxix. 4. b Heb. iv. 12, 13. c Rev. ii. 19, 23.

shortly, by our Lord Jesus, concerning the temper of our minds, and the course and tenor of our lives, now we are *in the way*.

1. We are all now *in the way*, following Christ, as his disciples here, in *consort*. We are *viatores —travellers*, under the conduct of our great Master, towards the better country. And here we are upon trial; it is the state of our probation; and according as our steps are, while we are in the way, our rest will be when we are at our journey's end. It concerns us therefore, what we have to do, to do it while we are yet in the way;[d] and whatever we do while we are in the way, to do it with an eye to our end.

2. There will be a review of what passes *in the way*;[e] it will all be called over again; every work and every word will be brought into judgment, will be weighed in a just and unerring balance, will be produced in evidence for us or against us. There will not need any repetition, every thing is now recorded in the book of God's omniscience; and it is enough that, in that day, the *books will be opened*, and all will be *judged out of those things which were* found *written in the books, according to their works*.[f] It concerns us therefore, whatever we do *in the way*, to do it as those who must give account, and to consider how it will pass in the account; how it will look in the review; that we may dread doing that which will make against us then, and may abound in that which will be *fruit abounding to our account*,[g] and which we shall meet again with comfort, on the other side death and the grave.

3. The account in the great day must be given up to our Lord Jesus, for we call him *Master and Lord*, as these disciples did; and to him therefore we are accountable, as *scholars* and *servants*, how we spend our time. He is our Judge, for he is our Law-giver;[h] and to him the Father has committed all judgment,[i] particularly that in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained.[k] Christ shall have the honour of it, and let all good Christians take the comfort of it, that he who is an advocate for all believers will be their judge: but withal, let it oblige us to the utmost care and circumspection in our walking: we must therefore labour to be accepted of the Lord, and approve ourselves to him in our integrity, because we shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ,[l] to give account of every thing done in the body. God made the world, by his Son; and by him, as the fittest person, he will judge the world.

Now this is a good reason,

(1.) Why we should judge ourselves, and prove our own work, and see that our matters be right and good against that day. Let us examine ourselves concerning our spiritual state, that we may make sure work for our own souls; and often call ourselves to an account concerning the way we are in, and the steps we take in that way, that we may renew our repentance for whatever we find to have been amiss, and make our peace with God in Christ. And *if we would* thus *judge ourselves, we should not be judged*[m] of the Lord. When we come to our journey's end, it will be asked, how we carried ourselves *in the way*. Let us therefore carry ourselves accordingly, and *ponder the path of our feet*.

(2.) It is a good reason why we should not judge one another, or be severe in our censures one of another: we thereby invade Christ's throne, for it is his prerogative to call his disciples to an account; and though he designed them to be one another's helpers, he never intended they should be one another's judges. *We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ*, and therefore must not judge one another. We must be judged ourselves; and may expect to be judged with severity, if we be severe in judging our brethren, for the measure we mete will be measured to us.[n] Our brethren likewise must be judged by the Lord Jesus, and, therefore, if we pretend to judge them, they are *coram non judice—before a judge without authority*. Who are we that we should judge another man's servant? *to his own master he stands or falls*,[o] and to his judgment it is fit we should leave him.

II. Among other things that pass *in the way*, we must expect to be called to account for what we have talked *among ourselves*. We are apt to make a light matter of this; and when we have talked at random, what comes uppermost, without regard to God or man, we think to turn it off with an excuse that it was but talk, and *words are but wind:* but we wretchedly mistake, and put a cheat upon ourselves, if that be true which our Saviour has told us, and undoubtedly true it is, that not only for every profane and wicked word, for every false and spiteful word, but *for every idle word that men speak*, they must *give account in the day of judgment;* nay, and so shall their doom be, for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.[p] Christ takes notice of what we say, now; and we should think we hear him say to us when we are in conversation, as he did to the two disciples going to Emmaus, *What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad*,[q] or, as ye sit and are merry? Are they such as become Christians? Are you not saying that which must be unsaid again by repentance, or you will be undone? And as Christ takes notice of it now, so he will call it over again in the day of account.

What we talk *among ourselves* with the usual freedom of conversation we do not expect to hear

d Matt. v. 25. e Eccl. xii. 14. f Rev. xx. 12. g Phil. iv. 17. h Isa. xxxiii. 22. i John v. 22. k Acts xvii. 31. l 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. m 1 Cor. xi. 31. n Matt. vii. 1, 2. o Rom. xiv. 4. p Matt. xii. 36, 37. q Luke xxiv. 17.

of again; it is *inter nos—between ourselves*, and therefore we think we may allow ourselves a liberty. What is said under the seal of conversation, we think almost as safe in point of honour, as what is said under the seal of confession; none but a tale-bearer, that great mischief-maker, will reveal such secrets;[r] but though it be talked *among ourselves*, it cannot escape either the cognizance or the judgment of our Lord Jesus.

1. If we talk any thing which is good among ourselves, and which is to the use of edifying;[s] which manifests grace in the speaker, and ministers grace to the hearers; Christ takes notice of that, and we shall hear of it again to our comfort, in that day when those who thus confess Christ before men[t] shall be owned by him before his Father, and the holy angels. When they who *feared the Lord spake often one to another*, for their mutual encouragement to hold fast their integrity in a time of general apostasy, *The Lord hearkened and heard it*, as one greatly well pleased with it, and *a book of remembrance was written before him*, in which were entered all those pious conferences *of them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name*;[u] and the day will come when this book, among the rest, shall be opened.

There is not a good word coming from a good heart, and directed to a good end, but it is heard in secret, and shall be rewarded openly, though, perhaps, there are those now who ridicule and banter such language. What is spoken for the edification of others, will turn to a good account to ourselves: and it will add to our joy in heaven, to have been any way instrumental to help others thither. Nay, if it should not reach their hearts for whom it is designed, yet the comfort of it will return into our own bosoms; and what was well intended for the honour of Christ, shall not be overlooked in the day of account.

This should engage and encourage us to keep up religious discourse, that it will be remembered to our advantage in the accounts shortly, though we may forget it; as the righteous could not say that ever they saw Christ hungry, and fed him, or thirsty, and gave him drink;[v] yet Christ will not forget it, but will place it to account, as an acceptable service done to him.

2. If we talk any thing that is ill among ourselves; if any corrupt communication proceeds out of our mouths, dictated by the corruption of our minds, and which has a tendency to corrupt the minds and manners of others; Christ observes that too, is displeased with it,—and we shall hear of it again, either by the checks of our own consciences, in order to our repentance, or in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God, when, according to Enoch's prophecy, the Lord shall come[w] to reckon with sinners, not only for all their ungodly deeds, but for all their hard speeches, spoken against him. It will be asked sooner or later, What was it that you said such a time, proudly, vainly, filthily, that foolish talking and jesting which is not becoming? What was it that you said in such and such company by way of reproach to your neighbour, when you sat deliberately, sat magisterially, and spoke against your brother, and slandered those,[x] whose good names you ought to have protected? or, which aggravates it, by way of reflection on your superiors; reviling the gods, and speaking evil of the rulers of your people,[y] little thinking that a bird of the air may carry the voice?[z] Let this consideration oblige us all to take heed to our ways, that we offend not with our tongue, and to keep our mouth as it were with a bridle,[a] that we may say nothing but what we can bear to be told of again. And we have need to beg of God, that by his grace he would *set a watch before the door of our lips*,[b] a double watch upon the door of our hearts, *out of the abundance of which the mouth speaks*, that nothing may proceed from them to his dishonour.

III. As our other discourses *among ourselves by the way*, so especially our disputes, will all be called over again, and we shall be called to an account about them. *What was it that ye disputed among yourselves?* What was the subject of the dispute? and how was it managed? Disputing supposes some variance and strife, and a mutual contradiction and opposition arising from it. Disputing by the way is falling out by the way, a thing directly contrary to the charge which Joseph, as a type of Christ, gave to his brethren, *See that ye fall not out by the way*;[c] and therefore we may expect to be reproved for it.

There are disputes that are of use among the disciples of Christ, and which in the review we may reflect upon with comfort. Did we dispute—For the conviction of atheists and deists, and other the enemies of our holy religion; or for the confirmation of those who were in danger of being drawn away by their delusions? Did we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints,[d] and with meekness and fear both instruct others that oppose themselves,[e] and give a reason of our own hope that is in us?[f] Did we, fairly and calmly, discuss lesser matters in difference between us and our brethren, that we might find out the truth, and have our mistakes rectified; or, if we cannot, hereby, come to be of the same mind, yet we may see that even those we differ from have so much colour of reason on their side, as that they may still differ from us, and yet not forfeit their reputation either for wisdom or honesty? Did we, with prudence and mildness, debate our cause with our neighbour himself, and not go forth hastily to strive;[g] did we tell him his fault between us and

r Prov. xi. 13. s Eph. iv. 29. t Matt. x. 32. u Mal. iii. 16. v Matt. xxv. 37. w Jude 15. x Ps. l. 20. y Exod. xxii. 28. z Eccl. x. 20. a Ps. xxxix. 1. b Ps. cxli. 3. c Gen. xlv. 24. d Jude 3. e 2 Tim. ii. 25. f 1 Pet. iii. 15. g Prov. xxv. 8, 9.

him alone,[h] before we told it to the world or the church, in order to a friendly accommodation? These are disputes which will pass well in the account when they come to be called over again.

But our disputes are too often such, that when we come to be asked about them, as the disciples were here, we shall, like them, hold our peace, as being ashamed to have them spoken of again, and having nothing to say in our own vindication: and (as the town-clerk of Ephesus apprehended) when we are called in question for the uproar, can show no justifiable cause, whereby we may give an account of it.[i]

Three things may occasion disputes among Christians, among ministers, neighbours, friends, relations, which, perhaps, when they come to be reflected upon, as here, will be found to have a great deal in them that was culpable: different opinions, separate interests, and clashing humours.

1. Disputes commonly arise from *difference of opinion*, either in religion and divine things; (about which oftentimes the disputes and contests are most violent;) or in philosophy, politics, or other parts of learning; or in the conduct of human life. While men differ so much in capacity, temper, genius, and education, and different sentiments are received by tradition from our fathers, it cannot be expected that men should all agree in the same notions. The same thing seen with different eyes, and by different lights, may appear to one true and very good, and to another false and very bad, though both employ their faculties about it with equal diligence and sincerity. This cannot but give rise to disputes, for we are naturally forward (and sometimes over-forward) to clear ourselves, and convince others; and have such a conceit of our own judgment, as to think that every body ought to be of one mind, and that if they will be ruled by reason, they will be so: for vain man would be wise, would be thought to be so, though he be born as the wild ass's colt.[k]

But these disputes are often such as we may justly be ashamed of, when we come to look back upon them.

(1.) Upon account of the matter of them. What was it that we disputed among ourselves? What was it we were so hot and eager about?

Perhaps it was something *above us*, about the nature and attributes, the counsels and decrees, of God; and the operations of his providence and grace; and the person of the Mediator: those *secret* things which belong not to us:[l] things which we did not understand, nor could: things which it was presumption for us to dispute about; for the angels with an awful reverence humbly desire to look into them,[m] as not pretending to be masters of them. And the great apostle, who had been in the third heavens, not only owned that the words he heard there were unspeakable,[n] but was so much at a loss to express himself concerning the work of redemption, though it is in some measure revealed, that despairing to find the bottom, he sits down at the brink, and adores the depth of that mystery: *O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God!*[o] O what reason have we with Job to abhor ourselves, and to repent in dust and ashes, because, like him, in our disputes with our friends,[p] concerning the reasons and methods of God's proceedings, we have darkened counsel by words without knowledge; and have uttered that which we understood not, things too wonderful for us.

Perhaps it was something *below us*, not worth disputing about, especially, with so much warmth and violence: it was a trifle, a mere strife of words,[q] a dispute *de lana caprina—about a thing of no value*; as if the matter were started only for want of something to wrangle about; so inconsiderable a thing, that which way soever it goes, the costs are much more than the damage. In the reflection, we may justly blush to think that we should make so much ado, so great a noise, about nothing.

Perhaps it was something *foreign to us*, that we were no way concerned in; some matter of politics it may be, which belongs not to those of our rank and station, but must be left to wiser heads, whose business it is to deal in things of that nature. Our Lord Jesus after his resurrection twice checked his disciples for a vain curiosity:—once in inquiring concerning one another's affairs; when[s] Peter asked concerning John, *What shall this man do?* Christ answered him, *What is that to thee? Follow thou me?*[r] —and another time in inquiring concerning God's counsels, *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons.*[s]

Perhaps it was something *indifferent*; like the controversy among the primitive Christians concerning the observing of days, and making a distinction of meats,[t] which the apostle himself does not think fit to determine, but leaves each side to practise according as their judgment was, without imposing upon either, since they might be of either mind, and yet be accepted of God; only he forbids them to fall out about it, or to despise or judge one another.

(2.) Upon account of our management of them. When our disputes among ourselves by the way come to be reviewed, it will be found that the mischief was done not by the things themselves, concerning which we differed, but by our mismanagement of the controversy.

Our Master will be displeased with us if it be found that we have been hot and fierce in our disputes, and have mingled our passions and peevish resentments with them; if a point of honour has governed us more than a point of conscience, and

h Matt. xviii. 15. i Acts xix. 40. k Job xi. 12.
l Deut. xxix. 29. m 1 Pet. i. 12. n 2 Cor. xii. 4.
o Rom. xi. 33. p Job xlii. 3, 6. q 1 Tim. vi. 4.
r John xxi. 22. s Acts i. 7. t Rom. xiv. 2, &c.

we have contended more for victory and reputation, than for truth and duty; if we have contended about things of small moment for, or against, them, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law and gospel; if we have spent more of our zeal on matters in difference than they deserve; and have lost the vitals of religion, in our heat about circumstantials, and have disputed away our seriousness and devotion, *What then shall we do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall we answer him?*[u]

If in our disputes for the truth, we lie against the truth, and *speak deceitfully for God*, the good intention will be so far from justifying the lie, that the lie will condemn the good intention, and convict it of hypocrisy; for if the intention were really good, such a practice would be abhorred. If we have the itch of disputing, and a spirit of contradiction, that is certainly one of those foolish hurtful lusts, from whence come wars and fightings. If we receive our brethren who are weak *to doubtful disputations*;[v] and love to perplex and puzzle them, and run them aground with objections against what they and we believe; it shows a great contempt both of the truth and of their souls, and is a jesting with both. If we judge, and censure, and condemn our brethren who are not in every thing of our mind, and though we call ourselves disciples, set up for masters, many masters;[w] if we give reproachful language, and call foul names, which commonly betrays the weakness of the cause, and is ingloriously pressed into the service to make up the deficiency of argument; we shall have a great deal to answer for, when all our disputes shall be called over again by our Master.

2. Many disputes arise from *separate and interfering interests in this world.* Neighbours and relations quarrel about their rights and properties, their estates and trades, their honours and powers and pleasures; *Meum* and *Tuum—My rent* and *Thy bond*, are the great subjects of dispute, and engage people in endless strifes. The first dispute we read of in the primitive church was about a money-matter; the Grecians quarrelled with the Hebrews *because* they thought their *widows were neglected in the daily ministration.*[x] Many disputes of this kind happen, which will be inquired into as well as those about differences in opinion; and therefore it concerns us to reflect upon them, that whatever we find to have been amiss in them may be repented of.

We may, in godly sorrow, quarrel with *ourselves*, and justly, for our unjust, unbecoming quarrels with *our brethren:*

Ask then,—What was it that you disputed about with such a neighbour, or such a friend, at such a time? Perhaps you disputed that which you ought to have yielded without dispute, a just debt or a rightful possession, which you thought to have carried, by dint of opposition, against equity. Perhaps you disputed about something very trivial, and of small value, which was not worth controverting, but which if the right were indeed of your side, you might have receded from it for peace' sake, without any detriment to yourselves or families. Perhaps the dispute might have been prevented, or when it was began, might quickly and easily have been accommodated, with a little wisdom and love; as the strife between Abraham and Lot was soon ended, and the matter compromised by Abraham's prudent condescension.[y] A little yielding would pacify great offences, and put an effectual stop to that threatening mischief which sometimes a little fire kindles.

Review your law-suits. And it may be you will find, that how stiff soever you were in the heat of the prosecution of them, your cooler thoughts tell you they were not managed as become Christians; you did not try to end things, as you ought to have done, in an amicable way. Perhaps they were begun rashly, and in passion; and then no wonder if they be carried on unfairly, and that which was a hasty, sudden passion in the beginning of the quarrel, is in danger of ripening into a rooted malice before the end of it, and they who at first pretended that they designed only to *right themselves*, at length, as their resentments have grown more and more keen, are not ashamed to own that they are resolved to *avenge themselves.*

These disputes, as they are most common, so they are most scandalous, among relations, and those who are under particular obligations to love one another. And whatever keeps brethren from dwelling together in unity, is very provoking to Christ, who has made brotherly love the livery of his family: and it is very hardly removed: for a *brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are as the door of a castle;*[z] witness Jacob and Esau.

3. Some disputes, and hot ones too, arise merely from *passion and clashing humours*, where really there is nothing of judgment or interest in the case. Some indulge themselves in a crossness of temper, that makes them continually uneasy to their relations, the nearest, the dearest, and to all about them. They love to thwart and disagree, and to dispute every thing, though ever so plain, or ever so trifling. Many make their lives, and the relations wherein they stand, uncomfortable by this; especially when both sides are of such a spirit: one will have their humour, their saying, and the other will have theirs, and so they are ever and anon disputing which shall be greatest, and instead of aiming to please, are contriving to displease and contradict one another.

But do such consider, that they must give an ac-

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u Job xxxi. 14. v Rom. xiv. 1. w James iii. 1. x Acts vi. 1. y Gen. xiii. 8, 9. z Prov. xviii. 19.

count to Christ for all these *disputes among themselves by the way;* that they will all be called over again? How ill does it become the disciples and followers of the humble Jesus to carry things with a high hand, imperiously and with rigour, toward their inferior relations; not suffering them to speak for themselves, nor willing to hear reason from them. How ill does it become the worshippers of the God of love to be envious, and spiteful, and ill-natured, and quarrelsome with all they have any dealings with! The father of the prodigal, when his elder son was out of humour, angry, and would not come in, did not dispute with him, chide him, and threaten him, though he very well deserved it; but he went out and entreated him,[a] spoke to him smoothly, and so brought him into good temper again: which is written for our *learning*, that we may go and do likewise, but withal for our *shame* that we have not done so. By the account which the Scripture gives of some peevish passionate disputes, it appears that notice is taken of the height to which the ferment of the spirit rises at such a time. When the men of Ephraim quarrelled with Gideon upon a point of honour, it is left upon record, that they did *chide with him sharply*,[b] though by his exemplary mildness, as well as by his eminent services, he deserved better at their hands. When, in a like case, Judah and Israel fell out, it is observed, that *the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.*[c] And if it be so indeed, that an account is kept of the sharpness of our chiding, and the fierceness of our words, we are concerned by true repentance to judge ourselves for it, that we may not be judged of the Lord.

And whatever we find has been amiss in our disputes of any kind, let it be amended for the future.

(1.) As far as we are able to make a judgment, let us see to it that we have truth and right on our side, in all our disputes, and not be confident any further than we see just cause to be so. We must not only never contend for that which we know to be false and wrong, but also never for that which is doubtful, or which we do not know to be true and right. Let us not wrong our consciences in any of our contests; nor say we believe that to be true, and therefore dispute for it, which really we do not believe to be so; nor demand that *as* our own, which we know or have reason to suspect we have no good title to; nor deny that to another which we cannot but think is justly his.

And if, in the progress of any dispute or controversy, it be made to appear to us, at length, that we were mistaken, and in the wrong, we must be ready to acknowledge it, thankful to those who have discovered it to us, and not ashamed to let fall the controversy. And we have a false notion of honour, if we think this will be any real disparagement to us; for certainly St. Paul showed more true courage, and merited more true praise, when he said, *I can do nothing against the truth*,[d] than Goliah did, when he defied all the armies of Israel.

(2.) In matters of doubtful disputation: while we are contending for that which we take to be right, let us at the same time think it possible that we may be in the wrong. When we contend for the great principles of religion, in which all good Christians are agreed, we need not fear our being in a mistake; they are of undoubted certainty, *We know and are sure that Jesus is the Christ.* But there are many things that are not so clearly revealed, because not of so much moment, in which the truth indeed lies but on one side, and yet wise and good men are not agreed on which side it lies. Here, though we both argue and act according to the light that God has given us, yet we must not be over-confident of our own judgment, as if wisdom must die with us. Others have understanding as well as we, and are not inferior to us;[e] nay, perhaps, they every way excel us, and, therefore, who can tell but they may be in the right? However, they argue and act according to the light they have, which we ought to pay a deference to, so as not to condemn all those for weak men, or bad men, who are not in every thing of our mind, and will not say as we say. Job in dispute is not unwilling to put the case, *Be it that I have erred.*[f]

In matters of fact on which right depends, it is possible we may be mistaken; *Humanum est errare —to err is human.* Words may be misunderstood and misapprehended; and the wisest, and most cautious and observing, may be guilty of an oversight, and may forget something that would very much alter the case; and, therefore, it will be no credit to our wisdom and goodness to be too positive, too peremptory, as long as there is a possibility of our being deceived. Never let our assertions go beyond our assurances, nor let us give that as certain and great, which was given us doubtful and little; but be very wary in what we maintain, not only for our reputation's sake, lest our neighbour search us and put us to shame, but for conscience' sake, toward God, who hates a proud look, and a lying tongue;[g] two very bad things, that commonly go together, to support one another.

(3.) Let us keep the full possession and government of our own spirits, in all our disputes. Let us carefully suppress all inward tumults, whatever provocation may be given us; and let our minds be calm and sedate, whatever argument we are engaged in. Let no contradiction put us into a heat or disorder; for when passion is up, we are not so capable as we ought to be, either to hear reason or to speak

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a Luke xv. 28. b Judg. viii. 9. c 2 Sam. xix. 43.

d 2 Cor. xiii. 8. e Job xii. 2. f Job xix. 4. g Prov. vi. 17.

it, nor is it likely we should either convince or be convinced of truth and right. Meekness and mildness of spirit do as much befriend a cause, as they are the beauty and ornament of its advocates.

If we contend for that which is wrong, the more passionate we are, the greater is the sin of the contention, and the more there is of the image of the devil upon it, who is not only the *father of lies* and falsehoods, but a *red dragon*, and a *roaring lion*. But if we have truth and right on our side, that needs no intemperate heats and passions for the support of it, nor can have any real service done it by them. The cause of heaven can never be pleaded with any credit or success by a tongue set on fire of hell. *The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.*[h] Parties may be served by fury and violence, but the common interests of pure Christianity will certainly be prejudiced by it. Christ was therefore fit to teach us, and we are invited to come and learn of him, it is not said, because *in him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, though that is certainly true, but *because he is meek and lowly in heart*,[i] *and can have compassion on the ignorant*; and herein all who undertake to instruct others must study to imitate him. And this is the likeliest way to gain our point, if indeed we be in the right; for *the words of the wise are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that rules among fools.*[k]

(4.) Let us never lose the charity we ought to have for our brethren in our disputes of any kind, nor violate the sacred laws of it. Our Lord Jesus foresaw, and foretold, that the preaching of his gospel would occasion much division, that it would set men at variance,[l] and be the subject of much dispute; and therefore he thought it very requisite to bind the command of mutual love so much the more strongly upon his followers, because there was danger lest it should be lost in these disputes: he makes it one of the fundamental laws of his kingdom, the *new commandment, That we love one another*; and the livery of his family, by which all men might know who are his disciples. *See how these Christians love one another.*

Let us, therefore, in all our disputes keep ourselves under the commanding power and influence of holy love; for that victory is dearly purchased, that is obtained at the expense of Christian charity. Let us honour all men, and not trample upon any, nor set those *among the dogs of our flock*, whom, for ought we know, Christ has set with the lambs of his. Let us never bring a railing accusation against any:[m] Michael the archangel, though he was sure in the dispute he had right on his side, and the glory of God was nearly concerned, and it was with the devil that he contended, yet he would not thus attack his adversary. The scourge of the tongue has driven more out of the temple than ever it drove into it. Let us always put the best construction on men's words and actions that they will bear, not *digging up mischief*, as evil men do, nor *rejoicing in iniquity*, but *rejoicing in the truth*, hoping the best as far as we can. Let us not aggravate matters in variance, nor by strained inuendos and misrepresentations make either side worse than it is; for that is a method which may harden one side, but can never convince the other, nor can be used with any other design but to make the contending parties hate one another; and whose kingdom that serves the interests of it, it is easy to say,—not Christ's, I am sure. Let us not judge of men's spiritual and eternal state, and send men to hell presently as reprobates, because they are not in every thing of our mind, or cannot fall in with our measures. They who do so usurp a divine prerogative, take the keys of hell and death out of the hands of Christ, and show themselves to be as destitute of the fear of God, as they are of love to their neighbour.

(5.) Let us often think of the account we must shortly give to our great Master of all our disputes with our fellow-servants by the way. Let us consider how our disputes will look in that day, and what our own reflections will be then upon them. When the apostle asks, *Where is the disputer of this world?*[n] "Perhaps (says the excellent Archbishop Tillotson) he intends to insinuate, that the wrangling work of disputation hath place only in this world, and upon this earth, where only there is a dust to be raised; but will have no place in the other, where all things will be clear, and past dispute: and a good man would be loth to be taken out of the world reeking hot from a sharp contention with a perverse adversary, and not a little out of countenance to find himself in this temper translated into the calm and peaceable regions of the blessed, where nothing but perfect charity and good-will reign for ever."

Let our *moderation* therefore *be known unto all men*,[o] moderation in all disputes, because *our Lord is at hand*; nor let us *grudge one against another, because the Judge standeth before the door*:[p] and we may tremble to think what our doom will be, if we be found *smiting our fellow-servants*;[q] and how we shall answer it, if it be proved upon us, who have had so much forgiven us by our Master, that, for a small matter, we have *taken them by the throat*.[r] But seeing we look for a day of account, in which there will be a review of disputes, let us give diligence, that we may be found of Christ in peace.[s] When Job and his friends had maintained a long dispute, in which many hasty peevish words were exchanged, God at length interposed as moderator, and gave judgment upon the debate, That they were all to be blamed, and had taken a great deal of pains (as most

h James i. 20. i Matt. xi. 29. k Eccl. ix. 17.
l Luke xii. 51. m Jude 9. n 1 Cor. i. 20.
o Phil. iv. 5. p James v. 9. q Matt. xxiv. 49.
r Matt. xviii. 28. s 2 Pet. iii. 14.

disputants do) to make work for repentance; and, therefore, the contending parties must ask pardon of God and one another, must forgive and forget, and live in love for the future. And this is the best end of controversies; happy were it if they were all brought to this issue now: to this issue all the controversies that are among good men will be brought at last, when they shall meet in the world of everlasting light and love.

IV. Of all disputes, Christ will be sure to reckon with his disciples for their disputes about precedency and superiority. That was the dispute here, *Who should be greatest;* and Christ does not *determine* the matter, as it might justly be expected he should have done, if he had intended that Peter, or any other of them, should have a primacy and supremacy above the rest; no, he is displeased with them for starting such a question, and disputing about it, because it was an indication that they all aimed at being great in the world, and were ambitious of it; and whenever preferments were to be had, they would quarrel among themselves, which should get the best; notwithstanding the meanness of their first education, when they were bred fishermen, which might have done *something* to curb aspiring thoughts; and the goodness of their late education, when they were trained up to be apostles, which might have done *much more*.

Now there are five reasons why this disposition of theirs was very displeasing to our Lord Jesus.

1. Because it came from a *mistaken notion of his kingdom*, which they had learned at the feet of their scribes, and had not yet unlearned, though they had sat so long at Christ's feet, so hard is it to conquer the power of prejudice. The Jews, misunderstanding many of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which spake of the Messiah and his kingdom; expected him to appear in external pomp and splendour, and to exercise a temporal jurisdiction, to break the Roman yoke from off their necks, and give them dominion over the neighbouring nations. The disciples had imbibed this notion from infancy, and imagined (as should seem by many instances) that our Lord Jesus, though he appeared meanly at first, would soon by it thus reign; and that this was the kingdom of heaven, which they were to preach as at hand: and this they had an eye to, when they strove who should be the greatest.

Now this was a great mistake, and the constant tenor and tendency of Christ's life and doctrine might have convinced them that it was so, that Christ's kingdom was not to be of this world,[t] but was intended to be all spiritual; the laws and powers of it, the rewards and punishments of it, all spiritual; (the weapons of our warfare are not carnal;) that the Messiah was to rule by his Spirit in the spirits of men. The design of it was to refine men from the dross and dregs of worldliness and sensuality; and to raise them up to a holy, heavenly, spiritual, divine life; and to teach them to look down upon all earthly things with a gracious and generous contempt. Such as this was the constitution and complexion of Christ's kingdom, and therefore, it could not but be displeasing to him, for them to dote on earthly greatness.

2. Because it was directly contrary to the two great lessons of his school, and laws of his kingdom, humility, and love. It is against the law of humility to covet to be great in this world, and against the law of love to strive who shall be greatest. Had not Christ taught them both these lessons, both by precept and by example? Had he not made it the first condition of discipleship, that whosoever would come after him must deny themselves? Does not the great law of love oblige us in honour to prefer one another,[u] and to give place to our brethren? What unapt scholars then were they, who had not learned such plain and needful lessons as these! How well is it for us that we have a kind Master, who does not expel out of his school dull scholars, but gives them his Spirit to open their understandings, and bring things to their remembrance.

When we are eager in our pursuits of the world, and seek and aim at great things in it; when we are quarrelsome with our brethren, and carried out into indecencies by our contests and passions; let us think how unbecoming Christians this is, how contrary we walk to the laws of that holy religion we make profession of. And can we glory in the honour of it? Can we, with any confidence, plead the promises of it, or please ourselves with the privileges of it, or feed ourselves with the hopes of it, when we have so little regard to the precepts of it? Will those be willing to lose their lives for their religion, who cannot deny themselves the gratification of a foolish lust or passion for it?

3. Because it was utterly repugnant to the example which Jesus Christ himself had set them, and the copy he had given them to write after. The word of command which he gave them when he called them to be his disciples, was, *Follow me;* do as you see me do. But when they were disputing who should be greatest, and each setting up a title to worldly pomp and power, they were far from resembling him, who was among them as one that served,[v] and came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.[w] The same mind should have been in them, that was in him; who was so great an example of humility and love, condescension and affection; who *emptied himself*, and *made himself of no reputation*;[x] who, not only in the general scheme of his undertaking, but in the particular passages of his life, gave such instances of self-denial, as justly

t John xviii. 36. u Matt. xvi. 24. v Luke xxii. 27. w Matt. xx. 28. x Phil. ii. 7.

are the wonder of angels; who, to teach them this lesson, and oblige them to learn it with this very argument, not long after this washed their feet, and bid them do as he had done.[y] Could the followers of such a Master contend for precedency, and not blush at the reflection upon their own folly and unworthiness?

Let us shame ourselves out of our pride, and passion, and affectation of worldly honour, and inordinate pursuit of worldly wealth, with this consideration: Shall I set my heart upon that which my Master was dead to, and denied himself in, and for my sake too? Am I not a Christian, a follower of Christ? I must then either change my name, or recover a better temper. Ought I not to walk in the same spirit, in the same steps?

4. Because it would render them very unfit for the services which he had appointed them to. It was very absurd for them to strive who should be greatest, who should live most at ease, and most in state, who should have the most power and the largest command, when they were all to labour and suffer reproach,[z] to live in meanness and poverty, to be loaded with disgrace and ignominy, and *counted as the off-scouring of all things*; nay, to *be killed all the day long*, and devoted to death, *as sheep to the slaughter*, and *ruled with rigour*. Such dispositions and expectations as these would be but a bad preparative for sufferings. They who would approve themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ must endure hardness,[a] and not affect greatness.

And, therefore, though this infirmity, and the mistake it was grounded upon, seems by many instances after this, to have continued as long as they had Christ's bodily presence with them; yet, before they *launched out into the deep* of their service, they were perfectly cured of it, by the pouring out of the Spirit upon them; after which, we have them no more dreaming of a temporal kingdom, nor striving who should be greatest; for those whom God designs to employ in any service for him, he will either find them fit or make them so: and *as the day, so shall the strength*, so shall the spirit, be. And if we would be ready for all the will of God, and stand complete in it, so as not to be driven from our work by the difficulties we may meet in it, we must be dead to worldly wealth and grandeur, and live above them, as those who look beyond them.

5. Because it was a corrupt temper that would be, more than any thing, the bane of the church in after-times; would be the reproach of its ministry, an obstruction to its enlargement, the disturbance of its peace, and the original of all the breaches that would be made upon its order and unity. Our Saviour foresaw this, and, therefore, took all occasions to check and repress it in his disciples, for a warning to all others; that all who are called by his name, and profess relation to him, may be jealous over themselves with a godly jealousy, and may look diligently, lest this root of bitterness spring up and trouble both themselves and others, and thereby many be defiled[b] and disturbed.

When we see how early in the primitive times the mystery of iniquity began to work in strifes among ministers, who should be the greatest; in Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence;[c] and in the man of sin, who, by degrees, under the influence of this principle, came to usurp an universal authority, and to exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped;[d] let us acknowledge with what good reason Christ so often cautioned his disciples against this, and lament the mischief that is done by it to the church. It must needs be that such offences would come; and we are told of them before, that we may not be stumbled at them; but woe to those by whom they do come. The prevalency of such a temper as this, as far as it appears, is very threatening. But when the Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high, there shall be no more such disputes as these; and then the wilderness shall become a fruitful field.[e]

Upon the whole matter, therefore, let our strife be, Who shall be best, not who shall be greatest.

1. Let us never strive who shall be greatest in this world; who shall have the best preferment; who shall be master of the best estate, or make the best figure; but acquiesce in the lot Providence carves out to us, not aiming at great things, or striving for them.

Consider what worldly greatness is:

(1.) What a *despicable* thing it is to those who *have their eye upon another world*. All who by faith have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, who are acquainted with the grandeur of the upper and better world, and are conversant with that world, have laid up their treasure in it, and set their hearts upon it, and hope shortly to share in the enjoyments of it; what a poor thing are the pomps and pleasures of this world to them! how easily can they write *Vanity* upon them! for they know better things. What are purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, to one who is clothed with the robes of righteousness and garments of salvation, and has a continual feast upon the promises of the new covenant? What are titles of honour, or splendid attendance, to one who is called a friend of God, and about whom the holy angels encamp? What are the fading, withering glories of time, in comparison with the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that is to be revealed? Let us be ashamed then to strive, or seem to strive, for that which, if we act as becomes our character, we

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y John xiii. 4—15. z 1 Tim. iv. 10. a 2 Tim. ii. 3.

b Heb. xii. 15. c 3 John 9. d 2 Thess. ii. 4. e Isa. xxxii. 15.

cannot but look upon with a holy contempt and indifference.

(2.) What a *dangerous* thing this worldly greatness is to those who have *not their eyes upon another world;* how apt it is to keep their hearts at a distance from God, and from the consideration and pursuit of a future blessedness; and to fix them to this world, and make them willing to take up with a portion in it: and, especially, what a strong temptation it is to break through all the sacred fences of the divine law to compass it. The devil would not have tempted Christ to worship him, with a promise of all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, but that he had caught many a one with that bait. As they who will be rich, so they who will be great, and cannot think themselves happy unless they be, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts:[f] let us, therefore, never court our own trouble; nor covet to enter into temptation, as they do, who, when they are as great as God saw fit to make them, are still aiming to be greater, and striving to be greatest.

2. Let all our strife be *who shall be best*, not disputing who *has been best*, that is a vain-glorious strife, but humbly contending *who shall be so;* who shall be most humble, and stoop lowest, for the good of others; and who shall labour most for the common welfare. This is a gracious strife; a strife that will pass well in our account, when all our disputes will be reviewed. If we will covet, let us covet earnestly the best gifts,[g] covet to be rich in faith, and rich in good works. If we will be ambitious, let it be the top of our ambition to do good, and therein to be accepted of the Lord.[h] If we will aim to excel, let it be in that which is virtuous and praise-worthy, and in a holy zeal for the honour of God, and the advancement of the true interests of Christ's kingdom. Herein let us strive to excel others, and to do more good than they do; not that we may have the praise of it, but that God may have the glory of it, and that we may provoke others to love and to good works;[i] not that we may be many masters, but that we may make ourselves *servants of all*. Let us go before—in zeal, and yet be willing to come behind—in humility and self-denial; do better than others, and yet, in love and lowliness of mind, esteem others better than ourselves.[k]

But especially let us strive to *excel ourselves*, and to do more good than we have done. Let it be a constant dispute with our own souls, Why we do not lay out ourselves more for God. And when we remember the kindness of our youth, and the love of our espousals, instead of leaving that first love, and cooling in it, let our advanced years contend earnestly to excel our early ones, that our last days may be our best days, and our last works our best works. *Forgetting the things that are behind*, let us still *press forward* toward perfection; press forward *toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling*,[l] that at length we may have not only an entrance, but *an abundant entrance, ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*[m]

f 1 Tim. vi. 9.
h 2 Cor. v. 9.
g 1 Cor. xii. 31.
i Heb. x. 24.
k Phil. ii. 3.
l Phil. iii. 13, 14.
m 2 Pet. i. 11

# FAITH IN CHRIST INFERRED FROM FAITH IN GOD :

IN

# A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE TUESDAY LECTURE, AT SALTERS HALL, MAY 29TH, 1711.

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JOHN xiv. 1. latter part.

——*Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

A DOMINION over your faith[a] is what your ministers are far from pretending to; but the direction of your faith is what they are intrusted with, that thus they may be *helpers of your joy*, for *by faith you stand*. What is Paul himself, or what is Apollos,[b] those great men? not masters in whom ye believed, but ministers only, by whom ye believed; not oracles, but stewards of the oracles of God. Now how can we better direct your faith, nay, how dare we otherwise direct it, than as we have received direction from the Lord Jesus, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Foundation and Fountain of it? And in the text we have his law concerning it, the rule of faith he prescribes to us. What he said here to those who were his immediate followers, he says to all, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me.*

This is here recommended in particular to the disciples of Christ; as a sovereign antidote against trouble of mind, proper to fortify the soul against the invasions of grief and fear, when they are most violent and threatening, and all other supports and succours fail. Christ was now leaving those who had left all to follow him, and he told them that whither he went they could not follow him yet;[c] which seemed to bear hard upon them, that they who had followed him in his sorrows, might not follow him to his joys; nay, must be left behind as sheep in the midst of wolves. Because of this, *sorrow filled their heart*. And though in Christ's departure from them there seems to be enough to justify their sorrow, yet there really is enough to pacify; and therefore, with good reason, as well as with good authority, he commands down those boisterous winds and waves, saying, *Peace, be still*. Let the sinners in Zion be afraid, and let fearfulness surprise the hypocrites, but let not your hearts be troubled. Though trouble surround you on every side, yet be wise, be watchful, and keep trouble from your hearts: and that you may do so, *believe in God*, and in his providence; *believe also in me*, and in my grace. And you will be kept from fainting by believing;[d] but if you will not believe, surely you shall not be established.[e]

But that which is here intended as a cordial in time of trouble, will not be so, unless it be our practice, for it is certainly our duty at all times, the duty of all those who hear the joyful sound of the everlasting gospel, not only to believe in God, but to believe also in Jesus Christ. And therefore I shall take it more generally, not only as an antidote against trouble of mind, but a caveat against practical deism.

1. Our Lord Jesus does here take it for granted concerning his disciples, that they did believe in God, and that in the belief of him they paid him the adorations due to his name, and the submissions due to his government, and that that faith was so firmly fixed in them, that it would not be shocked by any event of Providence, though ever so grieving, ever so frowning. *You believe in God*, that is, you receive and embrace natural religion, you admit the light of it, you submit to the laws of it. You believe the perfections of God, that he is infinitely and eternally wise and holy, just and good; you believe his relations to his creatures, as their Protector and Benefactor, their Owner and Ruler; his relations to his own people, as their Father and Felicity; you believe his providence, that it extends itself to all the creatures, and all their actions, to you, and all your affairs, with a certain cognizance, and a faithful steady conduct. Nay, you go further, you not only believe in the Lord your God, but you believe

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[a] 2 Cor. i. 24. [b] 1 Cor. iii. 4. [c] John xiii. 36. [d] Ps. xxvii. 16. [e] Isa. vii. 9.

his prophets;[f] you receive the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and subscribe to them: and you do well. Observe here,

(1.) That our Lord Jesus knows who believe in God, and who do not; for all hearts are open to his view, and he knows what is in man. When with the mouth confession is made unto salvation,[g] it is to give honour to him, not to inform him what the heart believes; for he knows it before we tell him, and better than we can tell him. That which is the prerogative of the Eternal Mind, is one of the flowers of the Redeemer's crown: *I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.*[h] He knows the sincerity of some, whom men suspect and reproach, and the insincerity of others, whom men confide in and applaud. We read of some who professed to believe in Jesus Christ, when they saw the miracles which he did; but *Jesus did not commit himself to them*, did not *believe* them, so the word is, *because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man.*[i] He knew that his disciples here did believe in God, and witnessed for them that they did so. And because he does thus infallibly know every man's true character, he is therefore fit to be the Judge of all at the great day, and to pass the definitive sentence upon every man's everlasting state; for we are sure that his judgment is according to truth, and cannot mistake.

(2.) That our Lord Jesus is highly well pleased with those who believe in God, and will take notice of it to their comfort and honour. He came into the world to reveal and reconcile God to us, and to reduce and restore us to God, not to draw us *from* him, but to draw us *to* him; and nothing is more acceptable to him than our believing in God, nor shall any thing be more comfortable to us. Christ fortifies us with this faith against all assaults: *Let not your hearts be troubled*, for ye *believe in God.* And those who believe in God need not be cast down and disquieted; as those have reason to be who are strangers to him, who have no dependence on him, or communion with him. They who believe in God, according to his word, have reason to rejoice in him with joy unspeakable; for their confidence in him shall not *make them ashamed.* They *know whom they have believed.*

2. He calls upon them who believe in God, to believe in him too. But did not the disciples believe also in Christ? No doubt they did; else they had not so easily left all to follow him, and continued with him in his temptations. When St. Peter, in the name of the rest, gave this for the reason why they would never quit their Master, *We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,*[k] they all subscribed to it as the confession of their faith, except Judas, whom Christ at that very time particularly excepted. And yet, Christ saith to them, *Believe also in me:* use the faith you have, set it on work, exert it, employ it, that by it you may keep your minds composed and quiet at this time. *Believe in me*, that is, live by faith in me. Even those who believe, as they have need to be prayed for, that God would help their unbelief, and increase their faith, so they have need to be preached to, and called upon to exercise their faith: *These things are written to you who believe* in Christ, *that you* MAY *believe* in him;[l] may be confirmed in your faith, and have the comfort of it.

Believing in God is a very great duty, and there are few but what profess at least to do it. They who have little else to say for themselves, will say this, "We trust in God:" and O that there were *such a heart* in all them that say so! But from those who believe in God, there are two things further required: *One* is a dictate of the light and law of nature; we have it given in charge by St. Paul to Titus, *This is a faithful saying, (and these things I will that thou affirm constantly;*[m] let it be frequently inculcated, and earnestly pressed upon all Christians,) *That they who have believed in God must be careful to maintain good works:* for *faith without works is dead;*[n] *it doth no good to others,*[o] and therefore will do *us* no good.—The other is a dictate of revealed religion, and we have it here in the text, "Ye believe in God, *believe also in me.*"

DOCT. It may justly be expected, and required, from those who believe in God, that if they are within the sound of the gospel, they should believe also in Jesus Christ.

I speak to those who are favoured with the gospel, who see that joyful light, who hear that joyful sound, and who are therefore concerned in this doctrine. As for those who enjoy it not, we cannot say it is required of them to *believe* in Christ; for *how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?*[p] Yet we cannot say, it is impossible for any of them, though they live up ever so closely to the light they have, to be saved by Christ they never heard of. It is *out of our line* to judge concerning them, for it is not *in our Bibles;* but let us judge this rather, that we who enjoy the gospel shall find it more intolerable for us in the day of judgment, than they will, if we obey not the gospel. As for them, it becomes us rather to leave them to God's uncovenanted mercy, than to his unpacified justice. For our own part, whatever favour they may find who are destitute of the light of Christianity, I see not how they can expect it, who rebel against that light, and reject the counsel of God against themselves.[q] The case is plain,—It is *good* to believe in God; but that is *not enough*, we must believe also in Jesus Christ. It is not sufficient to our acceptance with God that we

[f] 2 Chron. xx. 20. [g] Rom. x. 10. [h] Rev. ii. 23.
[i] John ii. 23—25. [k] John vi. 69. [l] 1 John v. 13.
[m] Tit. iii. 8. [n] James ii. 17. [o] James ii. 14.
[p] Rom. x. 14. [q] Luke vii. 30.

embrace natural religion, though it is indispensably necessary that we do so; but we must go further, we must admit the light, and submit to the laws, of the Christian religion likewise, which is consonant to, and perfective of, natural religion, and helps us out where that leaves us at a loss. And this is that which I am here to-day to press upon you, with all seriousness, that you sink not into a practical deism, as many do into a practical atheism; but, in every thing wherein you have to do with God, you may have a believing regard to Jesus Christ. *You believe in God, believe also in Jesus Christ.*

I shall here endeavour to explain,

I. The *objects* of this faith, and what that is which those who believe in God are to believe also concerning Christ.

II. The *acts* of this faith, and what that regard is which we must give to God, and must give also to Jesus Christ.

III. The connexion between these two, and how necessarily it follows, that those who truly believe in God will readily believe in Jesus Christ, when he is made known to them. And then make application.

1. Let us inquire, *what* man is to believe concerning God; and compare with that, *what* he is also to believe concerning Jesus Christ; and see, *what relation they have* to each other.

1. Do we believe in God, as the *Father Almighty?* We must believe in Christ, as his *only-begotten Son;* for Father and Son correlates. By the prescribed form of baptism, that great foundation on which the doctrine of the Trinity is built, we are directed to devote ourselves to the Father and Son; which plainly speaks a divine relation, not to us, (for though God may be said to be a Father to us, and a Holy Spirit to us, yet he can in no sense be said to be a Son to us,) but a relation to one another; and therefore they must be distinct persons; and so, as that the Son is the *express image of the Father's Person.* We cannot believe in God as the *Father,*[r] but we must believe in him who is the *Son of the Father,*[s] who is the *only-begotten of the Father,*[t] and therefore of the same nature with him. If any *deny the Son*, though they say they believe in God, as the Creator of heaven and earth, yet really *they have not the Father*, they have not the knowledge of him, nor an interest in him, as the *Father;* for they only who by faith continue in the *Son*, so continue *in the Father.*[u] Shall we think that God has the title of the Father ascribed to him so frequently, so solemnly, only as he is the Fountain of being to the creatures which are infinitely below him? (So the heathen called him the Father, so he is *Father of the rain, and hath begotten the drops of the dew.*[v]) No, he himself plainly intimated why he is called the *Father*, when he said to the Redeemer, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;*[w] which must be understood in a far higher sense than that of creation; for when the apostle would prove that Christ has obtained a more excellent name than the highest rank of created beings, he thus argues: *To which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?*[x] They were *sons of God* who *shouted for joy, when the foundations of the earth were fastened;* he was the *Image of the invisible God*, that existed *before all things.*[y] It is not, as some would have it, that he WAS *flesh*, and WAS MADE *God*, only as Moses was made a god to Pharaoh; for the Scripture says quite the contrary, that Θεος ην—*he* WAS *God,*[z] and σαρξ εγενετο—WAS MADE *flesh.*[a] This mystery we firmly believe the *truth* of, but awfully adore the *depth* of.

2. Do we believe in God as the *Eternal Mind?* We must also believe in Christ as *the Eternal Word and Wisdom.* God is an Infinite Spirit, and as such is to be adored by every one of us; and he has told us that the Redeemer we are to believe in is the *Logos*, that *in the beginning, was with God; and was God,*[b] in the constitution of all things. And (to show that he is the *Omega* as well as the *Alpha*) we find that in the consummation of all things, when he obtains a final victory over all the enemies of his kingdom, he appears and acts under the same title; his name is called, *the Word of God.*[c] It signifies both *Ratio* and *Oratio*, a word *conceived*, and a word *uttered.* Christ is both; as the thought is one with the mind that thinks it, and yet may be considered as distinct from it, so Christ was and is *one with* the Father, and yet *distinct* from the Father.

In all the divine counsels, Christ is the *Eternal Wisdom*, that when God *prepared the heavens*, and *laid the foundations of the earth*, and made man who is *the highest part of the dust of the world*, was *by him as one brought up with him:*[d] he is the *Wonderful Counsellor*, in whom are *hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Between the Father and the Son there is a perfect mutual consciousness, and particularly in the affair of man's redemption. *No man knows the Son but the Father, neither knows the Father, save the Son.*[e] The counsel of peace is between them both.[f]

In all divine revelations, Christ is *the Word* of the Father; that Word of God which is quick and powerful, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.[g] He only having lain in his bosom from eternity, none but he could declare him;[h] and though it is in these last days, that he has in a more especial manner spoken to us by his Son, yet the Spirit, in the Old-Testament prophets, was the Spirit of Christ.[i] And as he was the Maker and

r Heb. i. 3. s 2 John 3. t John i. 14.
u 1 John ii. 23, 24. v Job xxxviii. 28. w Ps. ii. 7.
x Heb. i. 5. y Col. i. 15, 16. z John i. 1.
a John i. 14. b John i. 1. c Rev. xix. 13.
d Prov. viii. 26, 30. e Matt. xi. 27. f Zech. vi. 12.
g Heb. iv. 12. h John i. 18. i 1 Pet. i. 11.

Mediator, so he was the *Messenger of the Covenant*, the *Amen*, the *faithful and true Witness*.

3. Do we believe that *God made the world, and governs it?* We must believe also that he made it, and governs it, by his Son, who is not only the *wisdom of God*, and his eternal word, but the *power of God*, and his almighty *right hand*. *The Father worketh hitherto*;[k] we believe he does, that he is the Fountain of all being, and the Spring of all life, power, motion, and perfection: but the Son has told us withal, that he worketh, and that *what things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise*.

Nothing appears more evident, by the light of nature, than that God made the world, and all things therein, that by his power, and for his pleasure and praise, they are and were created: nor does any thing appear more evident, by the light of the Gospel, than that God *made the worlds by his Son*,[l] that he *created all things by Jesus Christ*,[m] *that all things were created by him and for him*, and that *he is before all things, and by him all things consist*,[n] nay, *that without him was not any thing made that was made*.[o] So that if we receive the gospel, we must discern even in the things that are seen, not only the eternal power and godhead of the Father, but the universal agency and influence of the Son, and particularly with reference to the children of men, with whom his delights were; for in him, in a special manner, was that *life which is the light of men*.[p] Therefore he is called the Ἀρχη—*The principle* (so it might better be read than *The beginning*) of the creation of God.[q] And hence arises his sovereignty over all the creatures, and his property in them. He is *the first-born of every creature*;[r] that is, as the apostle himself explains it, he is *the heir of all things*;[s] and has not only by purchase, but *by inheritance, obtained* the *more excellent name*.

We are satisfied that God governs the world, and an abundant satisfaction it is to us that he does so, that his kingdom ruleth over all; but we must also be assured, and it will add greatly to our satisfaction, that the administration of the kingdom of providence is put into the hands of our Lord Jesus, and is united to the mediatorial kingdom; that he has an incontestable title to all, *All things are delivered to him by the Father*,[t] and for this reason, because *he loves him*;[u] that he has an uncontrollable dominion over all. Things are not only given into his hand, but put under his feet;[v] not only great power, but all power, is given unto him, both in heaven and in earth; and he is not only head of the church, but *head over all things to the church*. All the angels in heaven are his active servants, all the devils in hell are his conquered captives: the kingdoms of the earth are his, and he is the Governor among the nations;[w] *By him kings reign*, for to him the Father has committed not only the future judgment, but *all judgment*.[x]

4. Do we believe that God is our owner by right of *creation?* We must believe also, that Christ is our owner by right of *redemption;* and yet we have not two masters to serve; Christ and the Father are one, as to us. Nor do these properties stand in competition with each other: no, Christ owns his property to be derived, *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me*,[y] and yet withal it is acquired.

As to God we owe our *being*, because he made us, and not we ourselves, therefore we are not our own but his; so to Christ we owe our *well being*, our recovery from that deplorable state, unto which by sin we were fallen, and our restoration to the favour of God, and an eternal happiness in him. Thus, besides the original right he has to us as our Maker, he has an additional right by purchase; a right to command us, a right to dispose of us; we are his servants, for he has loosed our bonds; not only born in his house, but bought—not with his money indeed, but with that which is infinitely more valuable, his own most precious blood: and therefore we are delivered out of the hands of our enemies, that we might be devoted to him, to serve him without fear.[z] We are not our own but his, for *we are bought with a price;* more was paid for us a great deal than we were worth; and it was paid to him into whose hand our all was forfeited, so that no dispute can be made of his interest in us, and the authority he has to demand our best affections and services. As *one is our Father*, even God, so *one is our Master, even Christ:*[a] he is our Lord, and we are bound to worship him.

5. Do we believe that God is our *Judge*, to whom we must every one of us give an account of ourselves? We must believe also, that Christ is our *Advocate* with him, and that he is the *propitiation for our sins*. We are all conscious to ourselves that we are sinners, that we are guilty before God, have incurred his wrath, and laid ourselves open to his curse; and from him our judgment must proceed, a judgment against which there will lie no exception, and from which there will lie no appeal; a judgment which in its *inquiries* will look back as far as our beginning, for *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing:*[c] and which in its *decisions* will look forward as far as our everlasting state, which must by it be irreversibly determined.

Now, whenever we think of giving an account to God, we must have an eye to the Lord Jesus, as the one only Mediator between us and God, that blessed *Days-man* who has *laid his hand upon us both;* who is *our peace*, who arbitrates matters in variance be-

k John v. 17, 19. l Heb. i. 2. m Eph. iii. 9. n Col. i. 16, 17.
o John i. 3. p John i. 4. q Rev. iii. 14.
r Col. i. 15. s Heb. i. 2, 4. t Matt. xi. 27.
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in him; let us also depend upon Jesus Christ, and put a confidence in him. We believe in God, that is, we trust in him, we rely upon his wisdom to direct us, his power to support and strengthen us, his goodness to pity us, and his all-sufficiency to give all that *to us*, and work all that *in us*, and *for us*, which the necessity of our case calls for. And we therefore refer ourselves to him, and encourage ourselves in him; now let us thus believe also in Jesus Christ, and make him our hope. As we confide in the providence of God for all things that relate to the natural life; and cheerfully submit ourselves to the conduct of that providence, hoping by it to be carried comfortably through this world; so we confide in the grace of the Lord Jesus for all things relating to the spiritual life, and cheerfully submit ourselves to the operations of that grace, hoping by it to be carried safely to a better world; desiring not more to secure our present and future welfare, than to have the *grace of the Lord Jesus Christ with our Spirit.*[o] Our dependence must be upon Christ both for righteousness and strength,[p] the two great things we stand in need of; from a full conviction of our own guilt and weakness, and of his ability and willingness to save us from sin and wrath, we must venture all our spiritual concerns with him. In every thing wherein we have to do with God, we must make mention of his righteousness, and make use of his grace,—and, of both, as all-sufficient for us; must depend upon him to bring us safe through this wilderness to the heavenly Canaan; and having done this, as those who know whom we have trusted, we must be willing to venture all our temporal concerns for him, to leave, and lose, and lay out all for his sake, being well assured, that though we may be losers for him, we shall not, we cannot, be losers by him in the end.

III. I come in the next place to show the necessary connexion that there is between these two great duties, of believing in God, and believing also in Jesus Christ; and how the latter will follow of course, if the former be sincere, in all those to whom the glad tidings of the gospel-salvation are brought. They must needs embrace the Christian religion, who cordially entertain natural religion; and they who do not believe in Christ, whatever they pretend, do not indeed believe in God: for,

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We must also, if we believe in God, give credit to the many confirmations which we have of his testimony to his Son; the many miracles which were wrought to prove his divine mission, miracles of mercy, healing mercy, which served likewise to explain and illustrate it; especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power,[c] and in which God gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God;[d] that believing in him whom he raised from the dead, our faith and hope in him might be both evidenced and encouraged. The pouring out of the Spirit likewise, both in his gifts and in his graces, is a further attestation given to Christ's mission, for in them God bare him witness;[e] nay, the Holy Ghost whom God gave to them who believed in Christ, and obeyed him,[f] is said to be his witness; so that if we believe in the Spirit of God, we must believe also in Christ, and, therefore, the imputing of Christ's miracles, which were wrought by the Spirit of God, to Beelzebub the prince of the devils, is justly reckoned an *unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.*

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4. If we *believe God speaking by Moses and the prophets*, we must believe also in Jesus Christ; for to him bare all the prophets witness, and in all the ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, he was typified: if we believe the Old Testament, we must also believe the New; for such an exact correspondence and agreement is there between them, as between two tallies. The same grace which the Old Testament represents in shadows, promises, and predictions, the New Testament produces in the substance and accomplishment, so that they mutually confirm and illustrate one another. This our Lord Jesus insisted upon, as one of the strongest proofs of his divine mission, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament *testified of him;* and therefore he tells the Jews, who set up Moses in opposition to him, that Moses, instead of condemning him, condemned them for not believing in him; for, says he, *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me.*[k] In *the volume of the book*,[l] εν κεφαλιδι—*in the head* of it, (so the word is,) in the very beginning of the book of Moses, it was written of Christ, that as *the seed of the woman*, he should *break the serpent's head.* It is plain, therefore, ye *believe not his writings*, because ye *believe not my words.* Christ blamed the two disciples, and afterwards all the rest, for their slowness to believe what was written concerning him in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, all which was to a tittle fulfilled in him.[m] They who believed in the God of Israel, and received the oracles which by him were committed to them, knew very well that there was a salvation to be revealed in the last times; that a Messiah should come, to be a prophet like Moses, a priest like Aaron, a king like David,—and, like the sacrifices, to make reconciliation for iniquity; and that he should be cut off, not for himself, but for the sins of his people.[n] And do we not see all this abundantly made good in the Lord Jesus? Has he not done, has he not suffered, all that which it was foretold he should do and suffer? If, therefore, we believe that a Messiah was to come, we must believe that *this was he that should come, and we are not to look for any other.* The apostles therefore all along appealed to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, *saying no other things than those which Moses and the prophets said should come,*[o] and putting the unbelief of the Jews to their ignorance of *the voice of the prophets*, though they were *read among them every sabbath*

[b] 1 John v. 10, 11. [c] Rom. i. 4. [d] 1 Pet. i. 21. [e] Heb. ii. 4. [f] Acts v. 32. [g] Phil. ii. 11. [h] Luke ii. 14.

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We must also, if we believe in God, give credit to the many confirmations which we have of his testimony to his Son; the many miracles which were wrought to prove his divine mission, miracles of mercy, healing mercy, which served likewise to explain and illustrate it; especially the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, by which he was declared to be the Son of God with power,[c] and in which God gave him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God;[d] that believing in him whom he raised from the dead, our faith and hope in him might be both evidenced and encouraged. The pouring out of the Spirit likewise, both in his gifts and in his graces, is a further attestation given to Christ's mission, for in them God bare him witness;[e] nay, the Holy Ghost whom God gave to them who believed in Christ, and obeyed him,[f] is said to be his witness; so that if we believe in the Spirit of God, we must believe also in Christ, and, therefore, the imputing of Christ's miracles, which were wrought by the Spirit of God, to Beelzebub the prince of the devils, is justly reckoned an *unpardonable blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.*

3. If we *believe in God*, we must *give honour to him*, by *believing also in Jesus Christ;* for thereby he reckons himself honoured. If *we confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*, it is to the *glory of God the Father.*[g] It is certain, there is nothing in which the glory of God, and of all his attributes, shines more bright, or more strong, than in the great work of our redemption wrought out by Jesus Christ; and therefore, when the First-begotten was brought into the world, the angels who were charged to worship him sang, *Glory to God in the highest*, because, in Christ, there was *on earth peace, and good-will towards men:*[h] so that, unless by faith in Christ we receive that peace and good-will, and the record given concerning it, we do not as we ought give unto God the glory due to him, from that greatest of all the works of wonder by which he has made himself known. Do we believe in God? We ought then to give him the glory of all that infinite wisdom which contrived our redemption in such a way, that divine justice might be satisfied, and yet sinners saved; this is the *wisdom of God in a mystery, hidden wisdom, manifold wisdom, ordained before the world for our glory.*[i] We ought also to give him the glory of that kindness and love of God which designed this salvation, those tender mercies, whereby the Day-spring from on high visited us; love without precedent, love without parallel, whereby God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son for us. But how can we say we believe in him, which is giving glory to him, if we rob him of so great a part of his glory, by not believing in Jesus Christ, in whom his glory shines in a special manner?

4. If we *believe God speaking by Moses and the prophets*, we must believe also in Jesus Christ; for to him bare all the prophets witness, and in all the ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, he was typified: if we believe the Old Testament, we must also believe the New; for such an exact correspondence and agreement is there between them, as between two tallies. The same grace which the Old Testament represents in shadows, promises, and predictions, the New Testament produces in the substance and accomplishment, so that they mutually confirm and illustrate one another. This our Lord Jesus insisted upon, as one of the strongest proofs of his divine mission, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament *testified of him;* and therefore he tells the Jews, who set up Moses in opposition to him, that Moses, instead of condemning him, condemned them for not believing in him; for, says he, *Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me.*[k] In *the volume of the book*,[l] εν κεφαλιδι—*in the head* of it, (so the word is,) in the very beginning of the book of Moses, it was written of Christ, that as *the seed of the woman*, he should *break the serpent's head.* It is plain, therefore, ye *believe not his writings*, because ye *believe not my words.* Christ blamed the two disciples, and afterwards all the rest, for their slowness to believe what was written concerning him in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, all which was to a tittle fulfilled in him.[m] They who believed in the God of Israel, and received the oracles which by him were committed to them, knew very well that there was a salvation to be revealed in the last times; that a Messiah should come, to be a prophet like Moses, a priest like Aaron, a king like David,—and, like the sacrifices, to make reconciliation for iniquity; and that he should be cut off, not for himself, but for the sins of his people.[n] And do we not see all this abundantly made good in the Lord Jesus? Has he not done, has he not suffered, all that which it was foretold he should do and suffer? If, therefore, we believe that a Messiah was to come, we must believe that *this was he that should come, and we are not to look for any other.* The apostles therefore all along appealed to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, *saying no other things than those which Moses and the prophets said should come*,[o] and putting the unbelief of the Jews to their ignorance of *the voice of the prophets*, though they were *read among them every sabbath*

b 1 John v. 10, 11. c Rom. i. 4. d 1 Pet. i. 21. e Heb. ii. 4.
f Acts v. 32. g Phil. ii. 11. h Luke ii. 14.
i 1 Cor. ii. 7. k John v. 45—47. l Heb. x. 7.
m Luke xxiv. 25, 27, 44. n Dan. ix. 26. o Acts xxvi. 22.

*day*.[p] So that, in short, if we believe that there is such a thing as a divine revelation, that God has made a discovery of himself, and of his will and grace, to the children of men, we must believe the gospel, and the testimony it bears, *God has sent his son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might have* righteousness and life.

5. If we rightly apprehend how matters stand between God and man since the fall, as those must do who believe in God, who believe his holiness and justice, and his relations to man, we shall readily receive the notice which the gospel gives us of a Mediator between God and man; not only because we shall soon perceive how desirable it is that there should be such a Mediator, (and we are easily brought to believe what is for our honour and advantage, *quod volumus facile credimus—what we wish we easily believe,)* but because we shall perceive, likewise, how probable it is that a God of infinite grace and mercy should appoint such a Mediator, and make him known to us. It is a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, that it not only agrees with, and is a ratification of, the principles and laws of natural religion, and is an improvement and advancement of them, but that it supplies the deficiencies of it; it takes us up and helps us out, where that fails us and leaves us at a loss. So that if we make just reflections upon ourselves, and our own case as it appears to us by the light of nature, there cannot but be a disposition in us to receive and embrace the gospel, and to entertain it not only as a faithful saying, but as well worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If we rightly believe in God, and withal rightly understand ourselves, we cannot but perceive our case to be such as calls for the interposition of a Mediator between us and God; and we are undone if there be no such a one; and we will therefore cheerfully receive him.

(1.) We cannot but perceive that man has in a great measure lost the knowledge of God, and therefore should gladly believe in him who has revealed him to us. It is certainly the greatest satisfaction and best entertainment to our intellectual powers, to know God the author and felicity of our beings. The understanding of man cannot *rest* short of this knowledge; but we find that by the entrance of sin, our understandings are darkened,[q] and the children of men are generally alienated from the divine light and life, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: *The world by wisdom knew not God,*[r] and *the things of God* are *foolishness to the natural man.*[s] Are we sensible of this as our misery, that we cannot by any researches of our own come to such a knowledge of God, as is necessary to our communion with him? If we are so, we shall readily embrace Christ as a prophet, who having lain in the bosom of the Father from eternity, has declared him[t] to the children of men, and has brought into this dark world the light of the knowledge of this glory, with such convincing evidences of a divine truth, and such endearing instances of a divine grace and love in this light, as are abundantly sufficient both to captivate the understanding and engage the affections. This is the true light, which is sufficient to *lighten every man that cometh into this world,*[u] and to direct him through it to a better world. And shall we not open our eyes to such a light? Can we be such strangers, such enemies, to ourselves, and our own interests, as to love darkness rather than this light?[v]

(2.) We cannot but perceive, that there is an infinite distance between God and man, and therefore should gladly believe in one, in whose person the divine and human natures are wonderfully united. The light of nature shows us the glory of a God above us; *as heaven is high above the earth,* so are his *thoughts and ways above ours:* whence we are tempted to infer, that there is no having any communion with him, that he is not conversable with us, and that we cannot expect that he should take any cognizance of us. Shall we not therefore welcome the tidings of a Mediator between God and man, even the Man Christ Jesus? Shall we not be glad to hear, that this God *above us* is, in Christ, *Immanuel, God* with *us,*[w] God in our nature, *God manifested in the flesh;* the Eternal Word incarnate, which will facilitate our communion with God, and represent it to us as a thing possible? When we look upon God as the almighty Creator and Sovereign of the world, a being of infinite perfection and blessedness, we are tempted to say, *Will* this *God in very deed dwell with men,* with mean and sinful worms, *on the earth?* But when we look upon the Son of God clothed with a body, and visiting in great humility this remote corner of the universe, which God has let out to the children of men, as a vineyard to unthankful husbandmen, we are encouraged to say with triumph, *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men,* and *his sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore.*[x] We are quite lost in our thoughts, when we come to meditate seriously on the divine perfections, for they are an unfathomable depth, which we cannot find out, concerning which we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness; *If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up:*[y] but when we come with an eye of faith to see the Father in Christ, who is both God and man, and are brought by faith to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and through him to God the Judge of all,[z] this makes his glory the more intelligible, *(he that hath seen me,* says Christ, *hath seen the Father,)* his example the more

p Acts xiii. 27. q Eph. i. 18. r 1 Cor. i. 21.
s 1 Cor. ii. 24. t 1 John i. 18. u John i. 9.
v John iii. 19. w Matt. i. 23. x Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27.
y Job xxxvii. 20. z Heb. xii. 23, 24.

imitable, his favour the more attainable, and man's communion with him the more practicable.

(3.) We cannot but perceive the matter to be yet worse;—that there is a quarrel between God and man by reason of sin; that the God who made us is not only a God *above us*, but a God *against us*; and therefore we should gladly believe in him by whom that quarrel is taken up, in whom God was reconciling the world to himself,[a] and who is our peace. *You believe in God*, your great Lord and Lawgiver; and do you not believe, that he requires of you an exact conformity to the law of your creation; that since he made you for himself, to show forth his praise, you should aocordingly live to his honour; that he who endued you with the powers of reason, designed that your appetites and passions should always act under the direction and dominion of those powers? Does not even the light of nature tell you, that God, who is the *best* of beings, is to be loved and delighted in *above all*; that all the gifts of his bounty are to be received by us with thankfulness, and all the rebukes of his justice submitted to with patience? These are the rules which you know you should have been ruled by: but you know you have come short of these rules; that those affections of your souls have been set upon the world and the flesh, which should have been set upon God only; that the appetites of a mortal body, by which you are allied to the earth, have been indulged, to the unspeakable disgrace and detriment of an immortal spirit, by which you are allied to the upper world. It is not only the Scripture, but even natural conscience, that has concluded us all under sin. Those who had not the law, yet showed the accusing, convincing work of the law written in their hearts.[b] And will not your own hearts tell you likewise, that you having offended God, he is displeased with you, and you lie under his wrath? If God be infinitely perfect, as certainly he is, he is infinitely just and holy; and as the Governor of the world, is engaged in honour to punish sin, that his law may not be trampled on, and his dominion made contemptible. Do you believe *this* concerning God, and *this* concerning yourselves? and will you not welcome the tidings of a reconciliation between you and God, and gladly believe in him who was made sin and a curse for us, that we through him might have righteousness and life? Was Christ slain as a sacrifice to slay this enmity between us and God, and shall not we by faith lay our hands on the head of this sacrifice, and apply for an interest in it? Shall not the Prince of peace be our peace? Shall not we receive the atonement,[c] consent to it, confide in it, and take the comfort of it, when it is an atonement which God himself has appointed and accepted? When we see that God contends with us, and that it is in vain for us to think of contending with him; *with ten thousand* we dare not meet him that *comes against us with twenty thousand*;[d] it is like setting briers and thorns before a consuming fire, which are fuel to it, instead of being a fence against it; sure we shall see it is our interest to take hold on his strength, that we may make peace with him; especially when this method of reconciliation is not an uncertain thing, for he has told us *we shall make peace with him*.

(4.) Yet this is not the worst of it: we cannot but perceive that we are corrupt and sinful, that our nature is depraved and vitiated, and wretchedly degenerated from what it was, as it came out of God's hand; and, therefore, we should gladly believe in him who is *made of God to us not only righteousness but sanctification*,[e] and who came into the world, not only to restore us to the favour of God, but to renew his image upon us. Do we not sensibly find by daily experience, that our minds are alienated from God, and there is in them a strong bias toward the world and the flesh; that we are not of ourselves either inclinable to, or sufficient for, any thing that is good, but continually prone to that which is evil? And being thus *sick*, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot distempered, shall we not rejoice to hear of *balm in Gilead*, and a *Physician there?* And shall we not apply that balm, and put ourselves under the care of that Physician? If you believe in God, you believe that as he is holy so you should be holy: but you find you are not so, nothing of his resemblance appears upon you, and therefore you cannot expect he should put you among his children, or give you the pleasant land.[f] Will you not then believe also in him, who has undertaken not only to show us the glory of the Lord, but by his Spirit to change us into the same image from glory to glory;[g] and is able to make good his undertaking? For therefore *it pleased the Father, that in him all fulness should dwell*, that *from his fulness all we might receive, and grace for grace*;[h] that being grafted into that good olive, we might partake of his root and fatness; and though severed from him we can do nothing, yet we may be able to do all things through Christ strengthening us.[i] If it be indeed, as it ought to be, our shame and sorrow, that we are by nature so much under the dominion of a vain and carnal mind,—no saying will appear to us so well worthy of all acceptation, as this, that Christ Jesus came to *save his people from their sins*,[k] and to *purify* them *a peculiar people to himself, zealous of good works*.[l]

(5.) If we believe that God is the Father of our spirits, we cannot but perceive that they are immortal, that they must shortly return to God who gave them, and that we are made for another world,—and therefore will gladly believe in one who will be our

[a] 2 Cor. v. 19. [b] Rom. ii. 14, 15. [c] Rom. v. 11. [d] Luke xiv. 31. [e] 1 Cor. i. 30. [f] Jer. iii. 19. [g] 2 Cor. iii. 18. [h] John i. 16. [i] Phil. iv. 13. [k] Matt. i. 21. [l] Tit. ii. 14.

guide to that world, who will stand our friend in the judgment, and secure our welfare in the future state. Do we not find our souls strongly impressed with a belief of their own existence in a state of separation from the body? The thinking part, even of the heathen world, did so. Natural conscience, which is either a *heaven* or a *hell* in men's own bosoms, plainly intimates to them, that there is a state of rewards and punishments on the other side death, and a righteous doom of every man to the one or to the other: but when we come to inquire, "How shall we make the Judge our friend? What plea will bring us off in the judgment? What is the happiness that is set before us in another world? And what course shall we take to make it sure to ourselves?" When we ask "What shall we do to get above the fear of death?" (we see its stroke inevitable;) "what have we wherewith to arm ourselves against its terror? From what advances here can we take a comfortable prospect of our state hereafter? We must shortly be stript of all our enjoyments in this world; what is there that will befriend us in our removal to another world?" Here the light of nature leaves us quite at a loss. Neither the philosophers with their wisest considerations, nor the infidels with their boldest contradictions, could ever reconcile men to death, or enable them upon any good grounds cheerfully to quit this world. *Animula vagula, blandula,* (said one of the wisest of the heathen upon his death-bed,) *quæ nunc abibis in loca?—Whither art thou now going, O my poor soul?* Death, with a noted atheist, was a *great leap in the dark.* It is certain, nothing but Christ and his gospel can furnish us with such comforts, as will carry us without the fear of evil through the valley of the shadow of death. Shall we not then readily believe in Christ, and bid his gospel welcome into our hearts, that light by which such clear and full discoveries are made of life and immortality? Shall we not depend upon him with an entire satisfaction, and give up ourselves to his conduct, who has enabled us to triumph over death and the grave, and to say, *O death, where is thy sting,* where is thy terror? Have we not reason to entertain that institution as of a divine original, which is so wisely, so kindly, suited to our case in the last and greatest exigence of it; which shows us the way, through this wilderness, to an everlasting rest for souls; which divides Jordan before us, and makes a path through it for the ransomed of the Lord to pass over? Do we believe that our souls must go to God? and shall we not believe in him who will introduce us, who will receive our spirits, and present them to the Father, and lodge them in the mansions which he himself has prepared in his Father's house? How forward should dying creatures be to embrace a living Saviour, who is and will be life in death to all who by faith are united to him, and who has said, *Because I live ye shall live also.*[m]

Now lay all this together, and then tell me, whether those who believe in God have not a great deal of reason to believe also in Jesus Christ; not only to desire such a Saviour, but to depend upon the Lord Jesus, as every way fitted to be the Saviour, and able to save to the uttermost.

And now will you hear the conclusion of the whole matter?

1. Let us be more and more confirmed in our belief of the principles of natural religion, which Christianity supposes, and is founded upon. Let the dictates of the light and law of nature be always sacred with us, and have a commanding sway and empire in our souls. So agreeable is revealed religion to right reason, and the established rules of good and evil, that what contradicts and violates them, how plausible soever its pretensions may be, ought to be rejected, as no part of Christianity.

Therefore they who, under colour of zeal for Christianity, hate and persecute their brethren, kill them, and say they do God good service, or under that pretence despise dominion, resist the powers that are ordained of God, break the public order, and disturb the public peace, who think no faith is to be kept with those they call heretics, and that it is lawful to lie for the truth; these put a high affront upon the Christian religion, and do it the greatest wrong and injury imaginable. To such we may say, You profess to believe in Christ, but do you believe in God? *Is Christ the minister of sin?* If he came not to *destroy the law and the prophets,* but to fulfil them, can we think he came to set up a religion that should be served and advanced by a flat contradiction to those principles and rational instincts, (if I may so call them,) which were prior and superior even to the law of Moses and the prophetical inspirations? Christ came to renew the tables which sin had broken; not to blot out any thing that was engraven in the heart of man by nature, but to write upon the tables *according to the first writing,* and to *add thereto many like words.* If it *became Christ,* no doubt it becomes Christians, to *fulfil all righteousness;*[n] for we may say of the principles of natural religion, as St. Paul does of the law of Moses, *Do* we make them *void* by the faith of the gospel? God forbid; nay, we *establish* them.[o]

2. Yet let us not rest in a mere natural religion, and a compliance with it, but let us, with the fullest conviction and highest satisfaction, embrace and firmly adhere to the principles of revealed religion, and submit to the commanding, constraining power and influence of them. Let pure Christianity govern us in every thing, and both give law to us and give peace to us. Let faith be our guide with relation to another world, as sense and reason are with relation to this world; and then we shall be led into the paths, and brought under the dominion, of Christ's

m John xiv. 19.

n Matt. iii. 15.

o Rom. iii. 31.

holy religion. If there be any divine revelation in the world, it is in the Holy Scripture, on which Christianity is built; and *there* certainly it is, for we cannot think that God has put fallen mankind upon a new trial, (which he has not done for fallen angels,) and given him no new rule of duty and expectation, accommodated to that state of trial. The Scripture, therefore, is that which we are to believe, into which we must search, and on which we must build, for that is it that testifies of Christ. Christ therefore is he to whose conduct we must entirely devote ourselves, and on the all-sufficiency of whose mediation we must rely; else we are unworthy to bear the name of Christians, and wear the livery of his family.

As there is a practical atheism, which they are chargeable with who profess to know God, but in works deny him; so there is a practical deism, which they are chargeable with, who profess to believe in Christ, and yet have no regard to his mediation between God and man: and both the one and the other are no less dangerous than the speculative, and so much the worse, that they carry in them a self-contradiction.

Let us who are ministers make it our business to advance the honour of Christ, and to bring all to him; as faithful friends of the Bridegroom, who *rejoice greatly to hear the Bridegroom's voice*,[p] and to serve his interests; else we do not answer the character we are dignified with, as *his* ministers. Blessed Paul, though he was a great scholar, determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified,[q] counting all but loss for the excellency of that knowledge;[r] and he did as he determined, for "in all his writings" (as one of the ancients observes) "he breathes nothing but Christ." "Preach Christ, brother," (said the famous Mr. Perkins, to a young minister who asked his advice,) "preach Christ, brother." It is the language of all faithful ministers, *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for his sake.*[s] It is the character of Christians, that they have learned Christ:[t] but how shall they learn him, if their teachers do not preach him? The whole gospel centres in Christ; in him therefore let all our preaching centre. Let us preach down sin as an enemy to Christ, and that which he died to separate us, and so to save us from: let us press duty with an eye to Christ, in compliance with him, and gratitude to him. Let us prescribe comforts fetched from Christ, and founded upon his mediation. Do we aim at the conversion of sinners? Let us call them to Christ, persuade them to come and take his yoke upon them, and recommend them to him as the best Master. Do we aim at the edification of saints? Let us lead them into a further acquaintance with Christ, that they may grow up into him[u] in all things, as their Head and Root. Are we God's mouth to his people? Let us do as God did when he spake from heaven, give honour to Christ, and direct all to hear him.[v] Are we their mouth to God? Let us offer up all the spiritual sacrifices upon this altar, that sanctifies every gift. Let this golden thread run through the whole web of our praying and preaching; and in every thing let precious Jesus ever have the pre-eminence.

Let us all, both ministers and Christians, make Jesus Christ all in all to us; to us *to live must be Christ:* and *as we have received him* by our profession of his name, we must so *walk in him;* and whatever we do in word or deed, do all in his name, with an eye to his will as our rule, and his glory as our end, depending upon him both for strength and righteousness, and continually rejoicing and glorying in him.

It is to be feared, there are some even within the pale of the church, who seem to have some little religion, but they forget Christ, and leave him out of it. If we come to talk with them about their souls, and their eternal salvation, we find they have a reverence for God, and a sense of their duty to him, which they speak of with some clearness and concern; they have right notions of justice and charity, fidelity, patience, and temperance, yea, and of devotion to God, and invocation of him; and are under convictions of the necessity of these, for they believe in God: but when we speak to them also of believing in Jesus Christ, of their coming to God as a Father by him as Mediator, of the need they have of him in every thing wherein they have to do with God, and the constant dependence they ought to have upon him, they are ready to say, as the people did of Ezekiel, *Doth not he speak parables?*[w] This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that among those who are called Christians, there should be those found who are strangers to Christ, and are content to be so; to whom the *Light of the world* is as a *lamp despised*, and the *Fountain of life* as a *broken cistern;* and who are ready to say to Christ, *Depart from us*, and, *What can the Redeemer do for us*, which we cannot do for ourselves? We *pity* those who never heard of Christ, whom this Day-spring from on high never visited; for, *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* But *we are* justly *angry* at those to whom the great things of the gospel are preached, and yet they are accounted by them as strange and foreign things, and things that they are no way concerned in. It is an amazing infatuation, and what we may stand and wonder at. Be astonished, O heavens, at this!

(1.) It is strange, that any who are baptized, and are called Christians, can forget Christ, and leave him out of their religion; surely they must have

p John iii. 29 q 1 Cor. ii. 2. r Phil. iii. 8. s 2 Cor. iv. 5. t Eph. iv. 20. u Eph. iv. 15. v Matt. xvii. 5. w Ezek. xx. 49.

forgot their Christian name, for they have wretchedly forgot themselves. What? a Christian, and yet a stranger to Christ! *Aut nomen, aut mores muta—Either change thy name, or change thy spirit.* Is not the whole family, both in heaven and earth,[x] denominated from him, as having a necessary and constant dependence upon him? and yet he shall be out of mind, because for the present he is out of sight. Shall he be made a cipher of, who is to us the only figure, and who in the upper world makes so great a figure? Were not we baptized into his name; and by our baptism entered into his school, hired into his family, and enlisted under his banner; and yet shall we set him aside, as if we had no occasion for him? If circumcision was to the breakers of the law made uncircumcision,[y] shall not baptism be nullified, and made no baptism, to the contemners of the gospel?

(2.) It is strange, that any who are convinced of sin, and see themselves, as all the world is, guilty before God, can forget Christ; and leave him out of their religion, as if they could do well enough without him. What? a sinner, and yet make light of the Saviour! A dying perishing sinner, and yet not believe in him, whose errand into the world was to redeem us from all iniquity! Is the avenger of blood in pursuit of us, and just at our back, and shall not the city of refuge be ever in our eye? Can we see our misery and danger by reason of sin, (and we are shamefully blind and partial to ourselves, if we do not,) and not be continually looking unto Jesus, the great propitiation? Can we read the curse of the law in force against us? can we see the fire of God's wrath ready to kindle upon us? and not be glad to accept of Christ upon his own terms, Christ upon any terms?

(3.) It is strange that any who desire to have communion with God, to hear from him, and speak to him, and in both to obtain his favour, should forget Christ, and leave him out of their religion. I hope none I speak to are of those who say to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;* but that you will each of you say, with David, *It is good for me to draw near to God.*[z] Do you indeed think it so? Is that your choice? Is that your delight? Is this the thing you labour after, and are ambitious of, that *whether present or absent you may be accepted of the Lord?*[a] You know not yourselves, you know not your God, if it be not: and if it be, how can you expect to be accepted, but in the Beloved;[b] and that the holy God should be well pleased with you who are unholy creatures, but in and through a Mediator? It is by his Son that God does in these last days[c] speak to us, and it is by him that we are to speak to God; so that we cannot with any confidence approach to God, nor have any comfortable communion with him, out of Christ. If we neglect him, we come without our errand, and shall be sent away without an answer.

(4.) It is strange, that any who are in care about their souls and another world, should forget Christ, and leave him out of their religion. Brethren, you see yourselves dying daily, death is working in you; and you know that after death is a judgment, which will fix you in an unchangeable state of happiness or misery in perfection; you are standing upon the brink of an awful eternity, and are just ready to step in; now how can you hope to escape everlasting misery, much less to obtain everlasting happiness, unless you secure your interest in, and keep up your correspondence with, him, to whom all judgment is committed, who has the keys of hell and death in his hand, and is himself the resurrection and the life? Are we not concerned still to make mention of him, to whom the Father has given power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as were given him,[d] and who opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers. How dare we venture into another world, without being fixed on this foundation? Were our eyes opened, and our consciences duly awakened, the very thoughts of dying and going to judgment, would make such a terror to ourselves, as nothing could relieve us against, but a believing sight of Christ sitting at the right hand of God, ready to receive the souls that are in sincerity committed to him, to *redeem them from the power of the grave,* and to *present them to his Father.*

3. Let us all make it to appear in all our devotions, and in our whole conversation, that we not only believe in God, but that we believe also in Jesus Christ. Let our spirits be purely Christian; leavened with the gospel of Christ, and partaking of its relish and savour; delivered into it as into a mould, receiving its shape and impression, and in every thing conforming ourselves to it. The poor are said to *receive the gospel;*[e] they are *ευαγγελιζονται—evangelized,* so the word is. What will it avail us in the gospel, to behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, unless we be changed into the same image, and reflect that light which shines upon us, so that all who converse with us, may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus,[f] and that he dwells in our hearts by faith.

Let Christ be our plea for the pardon of sin, the plea we always put in, and firmly rely upon; let us never expect redemption but through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins; therefore we hope it is God who does and will justify, because it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again; and therefore we hope he will be our advocate with the Father, and a righteous, gracious advocate for us, because he is the *propitiation for our sins.* Let us

x Eph. iii. 15. y Rom. ii. 25. z Ps. lxxiii. 28. a 2 Cor. v. 9. b Eph i. 6. c Heb. i. 1. d John xvii. 2. e Matt. xi. 5. f Acts iv. 13.

make him our plea, and he will himself be our pleader.

Let Christ be our peace, and our peace-maker. When our consciences are offended and quarrel with us, when our hearts reproach us, and are ready to condemn us; let the blood of Christ, by which we are reconciled to God, be effectual to reconcile us to ourselves, and let nothing else avail, or be admitted to do it. What satisfied God, let that, and that only, satisfy us; and let that pacify our consciences which will also purify them. Let him also be our peace among ourselves. Let all good Christians, however differing in other things, be *one in him*, as he has prayed they may be: and let him who is the centre of their unity, be the powerful cement of their affections.

Let Christ be our prophet, and by him let us ask counsel of the Lord, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*[g] Let him be our oracle, and by him let us be determined; let the mind of Christ be our mind in every thing, and in order to it let his word dwell richly in us.[h]

Let Christ be our priest, and into his hand let us put all our services, all our spiritual sacrifices, to be offered up to God, because through him only they are acceptable.[i] By this name let us ever know him, let us ever own him, *The Lord our righteousness.*[k]

Let Christ be our pattern; let our spirits be renewed in conformity to his death and resurrection, and let us be so planted together in the likeness[l] of both, that it may be truly said, Christ is formed in us,[m] Christ lives in us,[n] and we are the *epistles of Christ.*[o] Let our whole conversation be governed in conformity to his example, which he has left us on purpose that we might follow his steps.[p] Let us so bear about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, as that the *life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal body.*[q]

Let Christ be the beloved of our soul, and let us make it appear that he is so, by our delight in his presence, our grief for his withdrawings, our constant care to please him, and fear to offend him, and our diligence to approve ourselves to him, as one we esteem and love. Let us have such a constant regard to him, to his will as our rule, and to his glory as our end, that we may truly say, *To us to live is Christ,*[r] and to us living and dying he is gain.

Let Christ be our hope, let him be our joy; and let us make it to appear he is so, by such a holy cheerfulness of spirit, as will be a continual feast to us. Let us see, let us find, enough in Christ to silence all our fears, and to balance all our griefs, and so to keep us always calm and easy. Do we believe in God? Do we believe also in Jesus Christ? Then let not our hearts be troubled, whatever happens to us, but let us be kept in perfect peace.[s]

Let Christ be our crown of glory,[t] and our diadem of beauty; let us value ourselves by our interest in him, and relation to him. At his feet let all our crowns be cast; let boasting in ourselves be for ever excluded, and let him that glories glory in the Lord, in the Lord Jesus.

Let Christ be our heaven; let us reckon it one of the chief joys of glorified saints in the other world, that they are gathered to Christ[u] there, they see his glory,[v] and share in it, they sit with him at his table, sit with him on his throne. And let us therefore not only be willing to die when God calls us, but be desirous to depart and to be with Christ,[w] to be together for ever with him, which will be best of all.

*To conclude.* Let that be the language of our settled judgments, which a learned and religious gentleman of the last age took for his motto, wrote in his books, contrived to have continually before him, and ordered to be engraven in the rings given at his funeral; "CHRIST IS A CHRISTIAN'S ALL."* And let that be the language of our pious affection, with which one of the martyrs triumphed in the flames; "NONE BUT CHRIST, NONE BUT CHRIST."

g Acts ix. 6. h Col. iii. 16. i 1 Pet. ii. 5.
k Jer. xxiii. 6. l Rom. vi. 5. m Gal. iv. 19.
n Gal. ii. 20. o 2 Cor. iii. 3. p 1 Pet. ii. 21.
q 2 Cor. iv. 10. r Phil. i. 21. s Isa. xxvi. 3.
t Isa. xxviii. 5. u 2 Thess. ii. 1. v John xvii. 24.
w Phil. i. 23.

* Judge Warburton.

# A SERMON,

CONCERNING THE

# FORGIVENESS OF SIN AS A DEBT,

PREACHED IN LONDON, JUNE 1ST, 1711.

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MATT. vi. 12. *And forgive us our debts.*

COMPARED WITH

LUKE xi. 4. *And forgive us our sins.*

FROM this petition in the Lord's prayer, thus differently expressed by the two evangelists, we may easily observe, (for prayer may preach, this prayer preaches,)

I. That sin is a debt to God Almighty; nay, it becomes us to express it with application, (for, so such truths as these look best,) *Our sins are our debts.*

II. That the pardon of sin is the *forgiveness of this debt*, and the discharge of the debtor from it: and as the former must be thought of with a penitent application, confessing and bewailing our sins, as our debts, so this with a believing application. This is a privilege offered to us in the gospel: O that we might partake of it!

Repentance and remission of sins, are the two great things which ministers are appointed to preach, in Christ's name, to all nations; and which Christ is himself exalted to the right hand of the Father to give,[a] else our preaching them would be in vain. I am here this day to *preach* them, depending upon divine grace to *give* them; as an ambassador for Christ, to beseech you, by repentance for sin, to be reconciled to God,[b] that by the remission of sin he may be reconciled to you. Brethren, these are matters of life and death, matters of everlasting concern; and therefore challenge your serious attention.

Many of you have a prospect of drawing nigh to the Lord, and having communion with him at his table: and what better service can I do you, than to assist your repentance in your preparations for that ordinance, and to assure you of pardon, upon repentance, in your attendance upon it? To show you sin, that in reflection upon it you may sow in tears; and to show you Christ, that in dependence on him you may reap in joy,[c] and by him may have your tears wiped away.

This similitude, which represents sin as a debt, and the pardon of sin as the forgiving of that debt, our Saviour often used: and it is a proper one, and very significant, and I hope by the blessing of God may be of use both to let us into the understanding of this great concern, and to affect us with it.

I. The sins we are to repent of are *our debts to God.*

There is a debt to God, which arises from the command of the law, and we do not pray to be discharged from that: a debt of duty, which we always owe, and must be always paying in the strength of his grace; a yoke so easy, that we cannot desire to be eased of it; a service so reasonable, as that, if we understand ourselves aright, we cannot but be reasoned into it.

*We are debtors, not to the flesh,*[d] says the apostle; we are under no obligation to serve it and please it, and make provision for it; which intimates that we are debtors *to God:* that which is said to be our *duty to do,*[e] is ὀ ωφειλομεν ποιησαι, that which *we owe the doing of.* We owe adoration to God, as a Being infinitely bright, and blessed, and glorious. We owe allegiance to him as our Sovereign Lord and Ruler. We are bound in honour and duty, in gratitude and interest, to observe his statutes, and to keep his laws; are bound by all the relations we stand in to him as our Creator, Owner, and Benefactor, to love and fear him, and under the influence of those two commanding principles, to serve and obey him: and we must reckon it our happiness, that we are thus obliged, and labour to be more and more sensible of the obligations. The loosing of our other bonds

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a Luke xxiv. 47. Acts v. 31. b 2 Cor. v. 20. c Ps. cxxvi. 5, 6. d Rom. viii. 12. e Luke xvii. 10.

strengthens these; so the Psalmist thought, when in consideration thereof he said, *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant*, for thou hast *loosed my bonds*.[f]

There is likewise a debt we owe to one another, which we must not pray to be discharged from, but always kept under the bonds of, and that is, brotherly love. When we are commanded to render to all their due, so as to owe no man any thing; yet we are told we must still owe this, *to love one another*;[g] which when we do we pay a just debt, and yet must still abound more and more.[h]

There is a debt to God, which arises from the curse and condemnation of the law, which we are fallen under, by our breach of the command of the law; and this is that which we here pray to be discharged from: the debt of punishment, that death which we are told is the *wages of sin*.[i] It is a penal bond, by which we are obliged to our duty; so that for non-performance of the duty we become liable to the penalty: and thus our sins are our debts; and being all sinners, we are all debtors. Know then that the Lord has a controversy[k] with you, an action against you, an action of debt, wherein—in his name—I here arrest you all, pursuant to the great intention of the Spirit, which is to convince the world of sin,[l] to charge men with a debt to God, and to prove it upon them.

In prosecution of this, I shall endeavour to show,

I. How we come to be in debt to God, how this debt is contracted, and what is the ground of the action. That I may keep to the comparison, not forcing it, but fairly following it, you shall see that we run in debt to God, as the children of men run in debt to one another.

(1.) We are in debt to God, *as a servant is indebted to his master*, when he has neglected his business, and wasted or embezzled his goods. Our Saviour represents our case like that of a servant to a king, who when he came to be reckoned with, (probably the revenues of the crown passing through his hands,) was found in debt to the king his master *ten thousand talents*;[m] and that of a steward who was *accused to his lord that he had wasted his goods*,[n] either through sloth and negligence, not taking the care and pains about them, that by the duty of his place he ought to have done; or through dishonesty, converting them to other uses than they were intended for, and serving himself with them.

We are servants to God, and have work to do for the advancing of the interest of his glory and kingdom in the world, and in our own hearts. This work is undone; we have stood all the day idle, and have done nothing, or next to nothing, of the great work we were sent into the world about; nothing to answer the ends of our creation and redemption, and in pursuance of the intentions of our birth and baptism; and so we become to be in debt, and deserve, not only to have our wages stopt, but to lie under the doom of the unprofitable servant, who is therefore called *wicked*, because slothful.[o]

We have been intrusted with talents,[p] which were put into our hands with this charge, *trade till I come*; make use of them in your Master's service, and for his honour: but we have not improved these talents for the end for which we have been intrusted with them, we have hid our Lord's money, have buried our talent, and so we come to be indebted. Time is a talent, it ought to have been filled up with duty; but we have mispent it, and trifled it away, and have not done the work of each day in its day, according as the duty of the day required: we are therefore so much in debt for lost time, time that can never be recalled. Opportunity is a talent, time fitted for the doing of that which will not be done at all, or not so well done another time. The time of youth, sabbath-time, the seasons of grace—the minutes of these are in a particular manner precious; but we have not improved these; we have received the grace of God in them in vain, have had many *a price put into our hands to get wisdom*,[q] which for want of a heart, *a heart at the right hand*, for want of skill, and will, and courage, we have not made the right use of. Our reason is a talent, with all its powers and faculties, which should have been employed in honouring God, but has been so wretchedly misemployed, that *the world by wisdom* (reason doing its best, as it thought) *knew not God*. Our limbs and senses, our bodily health and strength, are talents; for it is designed we should glorify God with our bodies:[r] but the members of our bodies have been instruments of unrighteousness[s] to his dishonour; and for this abuse of them we are indebted. What estate we have in the world, what interest we have in others, or influence upon them, is a talent, puts us in a capacity of serving God, and doing good. But have we done so? No, we have all come short, far short of the glory of God, have come short of glorifying him, and therefore deserve to come short of being glorified with him.[t]

We are stewards of the manifold grace of God:[u] a good stewardship it is, an honourable place, and very profitable. But have we been good stewards? It is *required of stewards that they be faithful*;[v] but when instead of living to God, and doing all to his glory, we live to ourselves,[w] eat and drink to ourselves, when self in every thing must be gratified, and self glorified, and our own things sought more than the things of Christ,[x] then, like unfaithful stewards, we convert that to our own use which should

f Ps. cxvi. 16. g Rom. xiii. 8. h 1 Thess. iv. 1.
i Rom. vi. 23. k Mic. vi. 2. l John xvi. 1.
m Matt. xviii. 24. n Luke xvi. 1. o Matt. xxv. 26, 30.
p Luke xix. 13. q Prov. xvii. 16. r 1 Cor. vi. 20.
s Rom. vi. 19. t Rom. iii. 23. u 1 Pet. iv. 10.
v 1 Cor. iv. 2. w Zech. vii. 6. x Phil. ii. 21.

*day*.[p] So that, in short, if we believe that there is such a thing as a divine revelation, that God has made a discovery of himself, and of his will and grace, to the children of men, we must believe the gospel, and the testimony it bears, *God has sent his son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might have* righteousness and life.

5. If we rightly apprehend how matters stand between God and man since the fall, as those must do who believe in God, who believe his holiness and justice, and his relations to man, we shall readily receive the notice which the gospel gives us of a Mediator between God and man; not only because we shall soon perceive how desirable it is that there should be such a Mediator, (and we are easily brought to believe what is for our honour and advantage, *quod volumus facile credimus—what we wish we easily believe,*) but because we shall perceive, likewise, how probable it is that a God of infinite grace and mercy should appoint such a Mediator, and make him known to us. It is a great confirmation of the truth of the Christian religion, that it not only agrees with, and is a ratification of, the principles and laws of natural religion, and is an improvement and advancement of them, but that it supplies the deficiencies of it; it takes us up and helps us out, where that fails us and leaves us at a loss. So that if we make just reflections upon ourselves, and our own case as it appears to us by the light of nature, there cannot but be a disposition in us to receive and embrace the gospel, and to entertain it not only as a faithful saying, but as well worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. If we rightly believe in God, and withal rightly understand ourselves, we cannot but perceive our case to be such as calls for the interposition of a Mediator between us and God; and we are undone if there be no such a one; and we will therefore cheerfully receive him.

(1.) We cannot but perceive that man has in a great measure lost the knowledge of God, and therefore should gladly believe in him who has revealed him to us. It is certainly the greatest satisfaction and best entertainment to our intellectual powers, to know God the author and felicity of our beings. The understanding of man cannot *rest* short of this knowledge; but we find that by the entrance of sin, our understandings are darkened,[q] and the children of men are generally alienated from the divine light and life, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: *The world by wisdom knew not God*,[r] and *the things of God* are *foolishness to the natural man*.[s] Are we sensible of this as our misery, that we cannot by any researches of our own come to such a knowledge of God, as is necessary to our communion with him? If we are so, we shall readily embrace Christ as a prophet, who having lain in the bosom of the Father from eternity, has declared him[t] to the children of men, and has brought into this dark world the light of the knowledge of this glory, with such convincing evidences of a divine truth, and such endearing instances of a divine grace and love in this light, as are abundantly sufficient both to captivate the understanding and engage the affections. This is the true light, which is sufficient to *lighten every man that cometh into this world*,[u] and to direct him through it to a better world. And shall we not open our eyes to such a light? Can we be such strangers, such enemies, to ourselves, and our own interests, as to love darkness rather than this light?[v]

(2.) We cannot but perceive, that there is an infinite distance between God and man, and therefore should gladly believe in one, in whose person the divine and human natures are wonderfully united. The light of nature shows us the glory of a God above us; *as heaven is high above the earth*, so are his *thoughts and ways above ours:* whence we are tempted to infer, that there is no having any communion with him, that he is not conversable with us, and that we cannot expect that he should take any cognizance of us. Shall we not therefore welcome the tidings of a Mediator between God and man, even the Man Christ Jesus? Shall we not be glad to hear, that this God *above us* is, in Christ, *Immanuel, God* with *us*,[w] God in our nature, *God manifested in the flesh;* the Eternal Word incarnate, which will facilitate our communion with God, and represent it to us as a thing possible? When we look upon God as the almighty Creator and Sovereign of the world, a being of infinite perfection and blessedness, we are tempted to say, *Will* this *God in very deed dwell with men*, with mean and sinful worms, *on the earth?* But when we look upon the Son of God clothed with a body, and visiting in great humility this remote corner of the universe, which God has let out to the children of men, as a vineyard to unthankful husbandmen, we are encouraged to say with triumph, *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men*, and *his sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore*.[x] We are quite lost in our thoughts, when we come to meditate seriously on the divine perfections, for they are an unfathomable depth, which we cannot find out, concerning which we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness; *If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up:*[y] but when we come with an eye of faith to see the Father in Christ, who is both God and man, and are brought by faith to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and through him to God the Judge of all,[z] this makes his glory the more intelligible, *(he that hath seen me*, says Christ, *hath seen the Father,)* his example the more

p Acts xiii. 27. q Eph. i. 18. r 1 Cor. i. 21.
s 1 Cor. ii. 24. t 1 John i. 18. u John i. 9.
v John iii. 19. w Matt. i. 23. x Ezek. xxxvii. 26, 27.
y Job xxxvii. 20. z Heb. xii. 23, 24.

life, and come to ask, *What honour and what dignity hath been done*[k] to our great Benefactor for all this; we find our returns of duty and thankfulness no way answerable to our receivings of mercy, and so we become to be in debt.

This debt is still the greater, in that we have made not only poor returns, but ill returns, to the God of our mercies: he has nourished and brought us up as children, and yet we have rebelled against him;[l] he has loaded us with benefits, and yet we have loaded him with our iniquities: thus have we requited the Lord, like foolish people and unwise.[m] Much of our debt is contracted by the most base ingratitude imaginable to the best of friends, the best of fathers; and if you call a man *ungrateful*, you can call him *no worse*.

(4.) Our debt to God is, *as the debt of a trespasser to him upon whom he has trespassed*. Our sins, which are here in the Lord's prayer called, *our debts*, in the verses following are called παραπτωματα—our trespasses,[n] and thence we commonly use that word, in repeating the Lord's prayer. An action of damage differs not much from an action of debt, and this action lies against us as sinners.

We have broken through the fences and bounds which God by his commands has set us, and by which our appetites and passions should have been restrained and kept within compass; and so we are trespassers in debt to God, for trampling his law under foot, and his authority, as if we were resolved to be like our forefathers at Babel, from whom *nothing would be restrained that they imagined to do*.[o]

Nay, we have broken in upon God's rights, have invaded his prerogatives, by taking that praise to ourselves which is due to him only. We have gone upon forbidden ground, and like our first parents have eaten the fruit of the forbidden tree, by enriching ourselves with unlawful gains, and indulging ourselves in unlawful pleasures, meddling with that of which the Lord our God has said, *Ye shall not eat of it*,[p] *neither shall ye touch it*. By presuming on comforts which we were not entitled to, we become trespassers; as he was that intruded into the wedding-feast, not having on a wedding-garment: *Friend, how camest thou hither?*[q]

By those trespasses upon the divine authority, we have injured God, have injured him in his honour. (And the creature cannot otherwise be injurious to the Creator but in his honour; *If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him?*)[r] By this, we are indebted to him; satisfaction is demanded for the injury: for *Shall a man rob God*,[s] and never be called to an account for it? trespass upon him, impeach his honour, and invade his property, and never hear of it?

(5.) Our debt to God is *as the debt of a covenant breaker*, who entered into articles, and gave bond for performance, but has not made good his agreement, and so has forfeited the penalty of the bond, which is recoverable as far as the damage goes, by the non-performance of the articles. An oath is called a "Bond upon the soul," because it was commonly made with an imprecation of evil, if the promise was not performed; so that he who broke his promise so ratified, could not but feel himself under the burthen of his own curse.

This is our case; we are bound out from all sin, and bound up to all duty, not only by the bond of a command, but by the bond of a covenant, to which we have ourselves subscribed with the hand; we have by solemn promise engaged ourselves to be the Lord's, to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes;[t] our baptism was an early and lasting obligation upon us to be religious: but we have broken our covenant with God, have violated our engagements, and thereby have not only forfeited the blessings of the covenant, but made ourselves obnoxious to the curses of it; and so we are in debt to God, as they were who transgressed the covenant which they made before God when they cut the calf in twain,[u] wishing that they might so be cut asunder, if they did not deal faithfully. This is assigned as the ground of God's controversy with the world of mankind, and for which they are all laid under the arrest of his curse; they have *changed the ordinance*, and *broken the everlasting covenant, therefore hath the curse devoured the earth*.[v]

(6.) Our debt to God is *as the debt of a malefactor, to the law and to the government*, when he is found guilty of treason or felony, and consequently the law is to have its course against him. And this is the most proper notion of the debt of sin; for though our Saviour in his parables alludes to money-debts, yet the case between God and man is not as that between debtor and creditor in commerce: for God is our Sovereign, and we are his subjects; he is our Law-giver, and we are bound by his laws. The primary obligation is the command of the law, to obey that; which if we fail in, we fall under a secondary obligation to the curse of the law; and therefore as many as being sinners are under the law, are under the curse, for so it is written, *Cursed is every one, that continues not in every thing that is written in the book of the law to do it*.[w] But God knows, and our own hearts know, that we have not continued, no not in any thing; we are all guilty before God,[x] subject to his judgment. The Scripture hath *concluded us all under sin*; shuts us up as debtors and criminals are shut up in prison, that the law may have its course.

We have all broken the commands of the law, and so are become liable to the sentence of it, *The*

k Est. vi. 3. l Isa. i. 3. m Deut. xxxii. 6.
n Matt. vi. 15. o Gen. xi. 6.
p Gen. ii. 7. q Matt. xxii 12.
r Job xxxv. 6. s Mal. iii. 8. t Deut. xxvi. 17.
u Jer. xxxiv. 18. v Isa. xxiv. 5, 6.
w Gal. iii. 10. x Rom. iii. 19.

*soul that sins shall die;*[z] shall die, as a soul can die; shall be made completely miserable. Our blessedness is forfeited, as the life, honour, and estate of a traitor is to the public justice, to which he is thus to make the uttermost satisfaction he is capable of making: the case is ours, and a deplorable case it is. As the corruption of our nature makes us odious to God's holiness, so our many actual transgressions make us obnoxious to his justice; and thus we are debtors to him.

(7.) To make the matter yet worse, there is a debt we owe to God, which is *as a debt of an heir-at-law upon his ancestor's account*, of a son who is liable to his father's debts, as far as what he has by descent will go, and as far as he has any assets in his hand. By Adam's disobedience we were all made sinners,[a] were all made debtors; and laid under this charge, *That we are a seed of evil doers.*

The human nature comes to us by descent from our first parents, and it comes to us not only distempered but attainted by law; as the blood of a traitor is corrupted by his attainder. When those are under the dominion of death who yet never sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,[b] and God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, we must own ourselves indebted on the score of those who are gone before us.

(8.) There are debts of ours, likewise, which are *as the debt of a surety upon account of the principal.* I mean the guilt we have contracted by our partaking of other men's sins,[c] and making ourselves accessary to them, as if we had not had guilt enough of our own to answer for.

We have, by the influence of our example, by advice or encouragement, by contributing to their temptations, or exciting their corruptions, or by a consent and approbation *ex post facto—after the deed has been done*, made ourselves partners with others in sin, and have had *fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*, which we should rather have reproved; and so must answer not only for our doings, but for the fruit of our doings.

Having opened to you the several ways how we come into this debt to God, let us next inquire, what kind of debt sin is.

(1.) It is an *old debt*, it is an early, nay, it is an hereditary, encumbrance upon our nature. The foundation of this debt was laid in Adam's sin, we are in debt for the forbidden fruit he ate, so high does the account begin, and so far back does it look. We were born in debt, were *called*, and not miscalled, *Transgressors from the womb*,[d] debtors from the womb; we began betimes to go astray from God, and so to run further and further into debt: it has been long in the contracting, and continual additions have been made to it, by renewed acts of rebellion against God. Job when he is old is made to *possess the iniquities of his youth*, and Ephraim *bears the reproach of his youth.*[f] And how earnestly does David pray, *O remember not the sins of my youth.*[g]

(2.) It is a *just debt*, and the demand of it highly equitable. We cannot say that we are charged with more than is meet;[h] no, how high soever the penalty is with which we are loaded, certainly it is less than our iniquities have deserved.[i] It is divine justice, the eternal rule and fountain of justice, that charges us with this debt, and brings this action against us; and we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth; nor is he unrighteous who takes vengeance.[k]

(3.) It is a *great debt*, more than we imagine. It is represented by our Saviour as a debt of ten thousand talents.[l] In the computation of money, a talent is the highest denomination, it amounts to above 187 pounds of our money; multiply that by ten thousand, and what an immense sum does it come to. This is designed to show us what a great deal of malignity there is in every sin, how heinous it is in its own nature, it runs us a *talent* in debt; and withal how numerous our sins are, how many, how very many, our actual transgressions, they are *ten thousands*, more than the hairs on our heads. Well might the master say to that servant, when he upbraided him with his pardon, *I forgave thee that great debt.*

(4.) It is *a growing debt;* a debt we are still adding to, as a tenant who is behind of his rent, every rent-stage makes the debt more: till we return by repentance, we are still running further upon the score; still taking up upon trust, and treasuring up unto ourselves guilt and wrath against the day of wrath.[m]

3. Having seen what kind of debt sin is, let us next see what kind of debtors sinners commonly are; and we shall find them like other unfortunate debtors, that are going down in the world, and have no way to help themselves.

(1.) Bad debtors are oftentimes very *careless* and unconcerned about their debts; when they are so embarrassed and plunged that they cannot *bear* the thought of it, they contrive how to *banish* the thought of it, and live merry and secure; to laugh away, and drink away, and revel away the care and sorrow of it. Thus sinners deal with their convictions, they divert them with the business of the world, or drown them in the pleasures of sense. Cain endeavoured to shake off the terrors of conscience, by building a city.[n] It was once said of one who died over head and ears in debt, "Surely his pillow had some extraordinary virtue in it to dispose a man to rest, else one in that condition could not repose himself upon it." One would wonder what pillows sinners lay their heads on, who have been so *long* in debt, who

[z] Ezra xviii. 4. [a] Rom. v. 19. [b] Rom. v. 14. [c] 1 Tim. v. 22. [d] Isa. xlviii. 8. [e] Job xiii. 26. [f] Jer. xxxi. 19. [g] Ps. xxv. 7. [h] Job xxxiv. 23. [i] Job xi. 6. [k] Rom. ii. 2, 3, 5. [l] Matt. xviii. 24. [m] Rom. ii. 5. [n] Gen. iv. 17.

are so *deep* in debt to the justice of God, and never lay it to heart, nor inquire into the things which belong to their peace. O what multitudes of precious souls are lost, and perish for ever, through mere carelessness!

(2.) Bad debtors are commonly very *wasteful*, and when they find they are in debt more than they can pay, care not how much further they run into debt. How extravagant are sinners in spending upon their lusts! What waste do they make of their time and opportunity, and of the noble powers and faculties with which they are endued! like the prodigal son, who, when he was run away from his father's house into a far country, there wasted his substance with riotous living. So true is that of Solomon, *One sinner destroys much good*,[o] with which he might honour God, and do service to his generation; and runs through a great deal of valuable treasure.

(3.) Bad debtors are commonly very *shy of their creditors*, and very loth to come to an account. Thus sinners care not how little they come into the presence of God, but rather say to the Almighty, *Depart from us*; they take no pleasure in hearing from him, in speaking to him, or in having any thing to do with him; they desire not the knowledge of his good ways, lest thereby they should come to the sight of their own evil ways. They are shy of communion with their own hearts, and looking into their consciences, because they are not willing to know the worst by themselves. God hearkens and hears, but they speak not aright;[p] they do not take the first step toward repentance and conversion, for they make no serious reflections upon themselves, they never ask, *What have I done?* But the case of those tradesmen is justly suspected, who are strangers to their books, and are afraid of knowing what posture their affairs are in.

(4.) Bad debtors are sometimes *timorous*; and though they strive to cast off all care about their debts, yet, when they are threatened, their hearts fail them, they are subject to frights, and are ready to think every one they meet is a bailiff. Thus sinners carry about with them a misgiving conscience, which often reproaches them, and fills them with secret terrors, and a bitterness which their own heart only knows. When Cain was under an arrest for that great debt he contracted by the murder of his brother, what a terror was he to himself, crying out, *My punishment is greater than I can bear*,[q] though it was much less than he deserved. When Herod heard of Christ's miracles, he presently cried out, *It is John the Baptist whom I beheaded*, he is certainly risen from the dead. The wicked are sometimes made to flee where no fear is, much more where there is fear.

(5.) Bad debtors are apt to be *dilatory* and *deceitful*, to promise payment this time and the other, but still to break their word, and beg a further delay. It is so with sinners; they do not say they will never repent, and return to God, but not yet: *The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built*,[r] but they will assure you, that some time or other it shall be built. They are called to come to an account with their own consciences, to search and try their ways; and they are forward to promise that they will do it; nay, they will set the time when they will do it. The servant that owed ten thousand talents thought he needed not be beholden to his master for a pardon of the debt, only he begged forbearance: *Have patience with me and I will pay thee all*.[s] They shake off their convictions, and elude them, by shifting off the prosecution of them, like Felix, to a more convenient season, which season never comes; and so they are cozened of all their time, by being cozened of the present time.

4. To affect you the more with the misery of an impenitent, unpardoned state, having showed you what your debt is, I shall next lay before you the danger we are in by reason of this debt. Many who owe a great deal of money, yet are furnished with considerations sufficient to make them easy, but they are such as our case will not admit.

(1.) *An exact account is kept of all our debts.* Some who are in debt please themselves with hopes that their debts cannot be proved upon them, and so they shall escape harm by them: but this will do us no service; all our sins will be proved upon us. *These things thou hast done*:[t] it is in vain to deny it, or to avoid the action by pleading *Non est factum—It is not thy deed.* If the debtor keep not an account of his debts, yet the creditor does; they are all booked, all kept on record, laid up in store with God, and sealed among his treasures.[u] Job speaks of his transgressions as sewed up in a bag,[v] as the indictments are upon which the prisoners are to be arraigned; or, as bonds and notes are carefully tied up together to be produced when there is occasion. It will be to no purpose to contest the account, when the omniscience of God will attest it. *Went not my heart with thee?*[w] says the prophet to his servant. Was not God's eye upon us, when our backs were upon him, and we were running from him into by-paths? Were not all our ways, our sinful ways, ever before him? They were, without doubt they were; but therefore sinners are secure, and see not their danger, because (says God) *they consider not in their heart that I remember all their wickedness.*[x] But consider this, ye who forget God,[y] and his goodness, that God does not forget you and your wickedness. Our sins are never *cast behind his back*, till we have set them *before our faces*.

(2.) *We are utterly insolvent, and have not where-*

o Eccl. ix. 18. p Jer. viii. 6. q Gen. iv. 13.
r Hag. i. 2. s Matt. xviii. 29. t Ps. l. 21.
u Deut. xxxii. 34. v Job iv. 17. w 2 Kings v. 26.
x Hos. vii. 2. y Ps. l. 22.

*withal to pay our debts.* If a man be much in debt, yet if he knows he has wherewithal to answer all his creditors, he needs not much perplex himself, especially, if he can discount with his creditors themselves: and there are those who flatter themselves with a conceit, that this will help them in their dealing with God. For being ignorant of his righteousness, of the strictness of the demands of his justice, they go about to establish a righteousness[z] of their own, and are willing to hope that their good qualities, and their good deeds, will atone for their bad ones, and be a competent satisfaction to the demands of divine justice. Thus it is common for foolish debtors to talk big, as if they had wherewithal to give every body their own, and nobody should lose by them, when, perhaps, their all is nothing, or next to nothing. Laodicea thought herself rich and increased in goods, when she was wretchedly and miserably poor and naked,[a] but withal blind, and would not see.

But what good will it do us thus to deceive ourselves? Can the all-seeing God be deceived? It is certain we owe more than we are worth; whether our debt be more or less, five hundred pence, or fifty, we are not able to pay it.[b] We cannot plead that we have, by any services to God, or sufferings for him, made satisfaction for any part of our debts; nor can we promise that we will; for whatever good there is in us, it is God's own gift, it is his own work, for which we are yet more indebted to him. Whatever good is done by us, it is what we are already bound to. And though a tenant should pay his rent for the future, yet that will not discharge his old scores. We are become bankrupts, must own ourselves so, and for ever undone, if the debt we owe be exacted; for if God enter into judgment with us, and deal with us in strict justice according to our deserts, we are not able to answer him for one of a thousand.[c] *In thy sight, Lord, shall no flesh living be justified.* We have no oil to sell, as the prophet's widow had, wherewith to pay our debt; no equivalent to offer, nor any thing wherewith to make a composition. We are debtors to God, but he is no debtor to us, nor is he ever behind-hand with those who do any service for him: none has first given to him, that it should be recompensed to him again, Rom. xi. 35. There were those indeed who thought they had made God their debtor by their devotions. *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?*[d] But when the matter comes to be looked into, it appears that they are debtors to God, by reason of the wickedness of their conversations: *Ye fast for strife and debate.*

(3.) We have no friend on earth who can or will pass his word for us, or be our bail. Many poor debtors encourage themselves with this, that they have some kind relations, who will stand by them, and appear for them, and help them in a time of need: but poor sinful men can have no such prospect, since all their kindred are in the same helpless condition with themselves, as deep in debt as they are. The wealthiest worldlings, who have most money, cannot with it undertake to pay our debts to God: no, *we are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.*[e] Pardons are those gifts of God, which are not to be purchased with money in the court of heaven;[f] those, therefore, that are so purchased in the court of Rome, are but sham pardons; even those who boast themselves in the multitude of their riches, yet none of them can by any means redeem his brother.[g] The wisest virgins, who have most grace, have most oil, yet have none to spare, there is not enough for us and them. If God contend with us, no man on earth, or angels in heaven, can undertake to arbitrate the matter, or as a *Days-man, lay his hand upon us both;* can undertake to open the book by which we stand charged, or to loose the seals; none can do it but *the Lion of the tribe of Judah.*[h]

(4.) We are often put in mind of our debts by the providence of God, and by our own consciences. Some who are in debt hope to have benefit by the statute of limitations, and that the debt will be dropt for want of being demanded; but the debts we owe to God are ever and anon demanded, and the right is kept up by a continual claim. God makes it to appear that he takes notice of them, for he frequently gives us notice of them. Conscience is a standing monitor in our own bosoms, to put us in mind of our sins, and of the danger we are in by reason of them, and to stir us up to think of agreeing with our adversary in time. For this reason, they who resolve to go on in sin, and to have peace (such as it is) though they go on, do all they can to stifle the suggestions of their own consciences, and turn a deaf ear to them; as those who are in debt avoid them by whom they are dunned, and keep out of their way. But sooner or later conscience will be heard, and will force sinners to say, as Joseph's brethren did long after they had contracted the debt, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother.*[k]

Afflictions are messengers sent to us on this errand, to remind us of our debts, by awaking our consciences, and setting our sins in order before us: when bitter things were written against us, it is with this design, to make us possess our iniquities.[l] When God distrains upon our comforts, and removes them from us, it is to remind us of the arrears of our rent. *Art thou come to call my sin to my remembrance,*[m] (said the widow of Sarepta,) *and to slay my son?* These sharp methods, which God takes to put us in mind of our sins, are intimations how severe the

[z] Rom. x. 3. [a] Rev. iii. 17. [b] Luke vii. 41, 42. [c] Job ix. 3. [d] Isa. lviii. 3, 4. [e] 1 Pet. i. 18. [f] Acts viii. 20. [g] Ps. xlix. 6, 7. [h] Job ix. 33. [i] Rev. v. 5. [k] Gen. xli. 21. [l] Job xiii. 26. [m] 1 Kings xvii 18.

reckoning will be, if we never take care to get them pardoned.

(5.) *Death will shortly arrest us for these debts*, to bring us to an account. It is a sergeant, whose office is to require the soul, to strip it of the body, and to bring it to him who gave it, and to whom it is accountable. The authority of this officer is not to be disputed, nor his power resisted. When we are summoned by death to come to an account, we shall find there is no discharge in that war,[n] no remedy, but we must yield. *The wages of sin is death*,[o] and its constant attendant ever since it first entered.[p] Death is our discharge from other debts; in the grave the prisoners rest together, and hear not the voice of the oppressor,[q] but it lays us more open than ever to these debts, for "*After death the judgment.*" It is a maxim in our law, *Actio moritur cum personâ*—*The action dies with the person;* but it will be of no use to us in this case, for God, the creditor, never dies, and sinners, the debtors, are by death fetched in to appear before him.

(6.) *A day of reckoning will come*, and the day is fixed. As sure as we see *this* day, we shall see *that* day, when every man must give an account of himself unto God,[r] *and every work shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing.*[s] The young man who indulges himself in carnal mirth and sensual pleasures, is told that *for all these things God shall bring him into judgment.*[t] Though it is after a long time, yet it is in the set time, that the Lord of the servants, to whom the talents were committed, comes and reckons with them.[u] The God to whom we stand indebted, is one with whom we now have to do;[v] for we live upon him, and subsist by him, and have continual business with him, which should make it the more uneasy to us to think of lying under his displeasure. But that is not all, he is one προς ὁν ἡμιν ὁ λογος (as some read those words)—*to whom for us there is a reckoning;* we now have an account *with* him, and must shortly give up our account *to* him. How careful should we be so to judge ourselves, that we may not be judged of the Lord;[w] so to state our accounts, and balance them with the blood of Christ, that when the day of reckoning comes, we may give up our account with joy, and not with grief![x]

(7.) *Hell is the prison* into which those debtors will at length be cast, who took no care to make their peace, and there are the tormentors to which they will be delivered.[y] This our Saviour gives as a reason why we should agree with our adversary quickly, while we are in the way, because, if the matter be left to run on, we shall be delivered to the judge, to the officer,[z] to him who has the power of death; and so be cast into prison, into *chains of darkness*, a prison, the miseries of which are *endless* and *easeless*. It is a pit in which there is no water, not the least mixture or allay of comfort, not a drop of water, so much as to cool the tongue.[a] Some prisoners for debt live so merrily, that one would think their prisons were designed for their protection rather than their punishment; but hell is no such prison; there is nothing there but *weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth*, and the more for the many fair warnings given those prisoners not to come into that place of torment. It is a pit out of which there is no redemption; the debtor shall not depart thence till he has paid the last mite; which will never be, no, not during the endless ages of eternity.

And now, sirs, what say you to these things? You are many of you great dealers in the world; what a consternation would you be in, if upon casting up your books, you should discover yourselves to be in debt a great deal more than you are worth? You see you are so to God, and does it make no impression upon you? are you in no care, no concern about it? Is all I have said to you for your conviction of sin, and of your misery and danger because of sin, but as a tale that is told? If so, all I have to say concerning the pardon of sin, will be but *as a lovely song of one that can play well on an instrument.* But I trust you have laid, and will lay, these things to heart, that the debt of sin is really a burthen to you, under which you labour, and are heavy laden; and if so, the doctrine of the remission of sins will be to you *glad tidings of great joy*, and as *life from the dead.* Nor would I have taken this pains to show you your sins, if your case had been desperate, and I could not at the same time have showed you the great salvation from sin, which the Redeemer has wrought out by bringing in an everlasting righteousness.

II. The sins we are to repent of, being our debts to God, *the mercy we are to pray for is the forgiveness of these debts.* It is to God we are indebted, and therefore to him we must address ourselves for a discharge from the debt; for none can forgive sins, but God only, and therefore to him only must we go for that forgiveness. Having opened the wound, and showed you how dangerous it is, you will be ready to ask, *Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?* Yes, blessed be God, there is. The same messengers that God sends to put you in mind of your debts, are appointed to put you in the way of obtaining the remission of them: and this is that which, in Christ's name, is preached to all nations;—it is now preached to you.

1. Let us inquire, *what is included in this mercy* of the forgiveness of sin as a debt, and what steps God graciously takes therein toward us, when we repent, and return, and believe the gospel. He acts as a merciful and compassionate creditor toward a poor debtor who lies at his mercy.

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n Eccl. viii. 8. o Rom. vi. 23. p Rom. v. 12. q Job iii. 18. r Rom. xiv. 12. s Eccl. xii. 14. t Eccl. xi. 9. u Matt. xxv. 19. v Heb. iv. 31. w 1 Cor. xi. 31. x Heb. xiii. 17. y Matt xviii. 34. z Matt. v. 25. a Luke xvi. 24.

(1.) He stays process, and suffers not the law to have its course. Judgment is given against us; but execution is not taken out upon the judgment. The sinner is arrested by his own conscience as a debtor, and cried out against himself, *I have sinned*, and deserve to die. But pardoning mercy unties the knot between sin and death, and says, as Nathan to David, *The Lord has taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die*;[b] thou shalt not come into condemnation, thine iniquity is become thy grief and shame, and therefore fear not, it shall not be thy ruin. Thou shalt not have all thou hast seized on, thou shalt not go to prison, as thou deservest. The debt shall not be laid to thy charge.

The sinner is arrested by affliction, it may be, as Elihu's penitent is, and is alarmed by it to expect a much sorer punishment; *He is chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain*;[c] and then, under the sense of guilt and dread of wrath, counts upon nothing else but that his life shall go to the destroyers.[d] But he has a friend with *him, an interpreter, one among a thousand*,[e] who shows him God's uprightness; his hatred of sin; and yet his readiness to pardon sinners. This he begins to give heed to, and take hold of, and thinks of returning to God, as the prodigal to his father's house; and then *he is gracious to him*;[f] meets him in his return, and says, *Deliver him from going down to the pit*; let him be discharged from these pains, from these terrors, for *I have found a ransom*, a ransom for the soul. The sinner has said unto God, *Do not condemn me*;[g] and God has said, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*.[h] They in their repentings condemn themselves; men in their reproaches condemn them; and it cannot be denied, but that there is that in them which deserves condemnation. But *it is God that justifies*, and then *who is he that shall condemn?* Christ died, and therefore the believer shall not: he is afflicted and chastened of the Lord, but he shall not be condemned with the world,[i] that lies under the curse.

Well, this is a good step toward the forgiving of the debt; now there begins to be hope in Israel concerning this thing; herein appears the divine pity and compassion, God's slowness to anger, and readiness to show mercy; and this long-suffering of the Lord is salvation.[k] But the proceedings may perhaps be stopt for the present, and yet may be revived another time; a judgment that has long lain dormant may come against a man when he least thinks of it, and therefore God in forgiving these debts goes further; for,

(2.) He *cancels the bond*, vacates the judgment, and disannuls the hand-writing that was against us, that was contrary to us, and takes it out of the way.[l] He pardons sin thoroughly and fully, so as to remember it no more[m] against the sinner. He casts it behind his back,[n] as that which he is determined never more to inquire after; casts it into the depths of the sea,[o] as that which shall never more appear or come to light, as it might at low water, if it were cast near the shore side. The iniquity of Jacob shall be sought for and not be found;[p] therefore God is said to blot out[q] the iniquities of poor penitents, as the memorandum of a debt is blotted out when it is paid or pardoned; he not only crosses the book, which leaves it legible, but blots it out, not to be read; for so is the promise to a true penitent, *All his transgressions that he hath committed shall not be mentioned unto him*,[r] he shall not be so much as upbraided with them. It is *blotted out as a cloud, as a thick cloud*, by the heat of the sun; it is *vanished*, and there appears not the least remainder of it; The transgression is removed from the transgressors as far as the east is from the west.[s] These and many the like expressions, give us abundant assurance that the sin once pardoned shall not rise up in judgment against the sinner another day; and give us abundant occasion to say, *Who is a God like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?*

Well, this secures the life, and happiness, and eternal welfare of the penitent believer: but still he may want present comfort. The bond may be cancelled, and he not know it; the sentence of absolution passed, and yet he not hear the voice of joy and gladness;[t] so that the broken bones are still complaining: therefore God is pleased many times to carry this act of grace on yet further.

(3.) He gives an acquittance, and delivers it by his Spirit into the believer's hand, speaking peace to him, filling him with comfort, arising from a sense of his justification, and the blessed tokens and pledges of it. When he says, *Son, daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee*;[u] (as he spake comfortably unto Zion, saying, Thy warfare is accomplished, thine iniquity is pardoned;[v]) then he gives up the bond cancelled, to the unspeakable satisfaction of the penitent. We read of a woman who had been a sinner, a notorious sinner, who, upon her repentance, had much forgiven her, and showed it by her loving much;[w] yet afterwards Christ not only said OF her, *Her sins which are many are forgiven*, but turned and said TO her, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, and, *Thy faith hath saved thee*, to set forth this further act of divine favour, in causing us to hear God's loving-kindness, and to taste that he is gracious.

Well, blessed, thrice blessed are they whose iniquities are thus forgiven, and to whom they are

b 2 Sam. xii. 13. c Job xxxiii. 19. d Job xxxiii. 22. e Job xxxiii. 23. f Job xxxiii. 24. g Job x. 2. h Rom. viii. 1. i 1 Cor. xi. 32. k 2 Pet. iii. 15. l Col. ii. 14. m Heb. viii. 12.

n Isa. xxxviii. 17. o Mic. vii. 19. p Jer. l. 20. q Isa. xliii. 25. r Ezek. xviii. 22. s Ps. ciii. 12. t Ps. li. 8. u Matt. ix. 2. v Isa. xl. 2. w Luke vii. 47, 48.

not imputed; who by their own experience of the breaking of the power of sin in them, are made to know that the guilt of sin is removed; and to whom it appears, by their being reconciled to God, and to his whole will, that God is in Christ reconciled to them. But may it be hoped that these criminals shall not only be pardoned, but preferred, and made favourites again? Yes, to complete the mercy, he not only forgives the debts we have contracted, but,

(4.) He condescends to deal with us again, and to admit us into covenant and communion with himself. Though we have gone behind-hand in our rent, he remits the arrears, and continues us his tenants; though we have buried and wasted our talents, yet he continues us in his service, and intrusts us with more. Those we have been great losers by, though we may forgive them, yet we do not forget them, nor care for trusting them again. But in this, as in other things, the God with whom we have to do, is *God and not man*; he *forgives* and *forgets*, and yet will be no loser in his glory by forgiving. Lord! what is man, that he should be thus regarded? that he should not only be delivered from going down to the pit, but that his life should see the light,[x] the eternal light, and the paths that lead to it. When we pray that God would forgive us our debts, we pray not only that we may not be rejected, but that we may be accepted in the Beloved, according to the riches of that grace wherein he has abounded toward us;[y] that with the remission of sins, we may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,[z] the earnest of the Spirit, and *that*, at length, which it is the earnest of, even an inheritance among all them who are sanctified; for whom he justified them he glorified.

2. Having seen how much is included in God's forgiving us our debts, because it is so great a favour, that we may be tempted to think it too much for such worthless unworthy creatures as we are to expect, let us next inquire, *what ground we have to hope for it:* how is it that a God infinitely just and holy, should be thus readily reconciled to a guilty and polluted sinner upon his repenting? If we owe a great sum of money to a man like ourselves, we could not have the face to go to him, and desire him to remit it, when we have not wherewithal to make any composition with him. Why should not a just debt be paid? and if nothing is to be had, why should not the debtor be sold,[a] *currat lex—and the law take its course?* What reason have we to expect that the lawful captive should be delivered?[b] Blessed be God we may expect it, we may be sure of it, if we repent and believe the gospel.

(1.) We may ground our expectations upon the *goodness of his nature*. This is so much his glory, that by it he has proclaimed his name not only *gracious and merciful* in general, but in this particular instance, so that he forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin;[c] and therefore pardons the sin, because he desires not nor delights in the ruin of the sinner. How vast were the compassions of that prince in the parable, which moved him to forgive so great a debt, as that of ten thousand talents![d] And yet, as heaven is high above the earth, so do the divine compassions exceed those: Israel of old found them so, when their transgressions were so very numerous, so very heinous; yet he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity. Merciful men will sometimes lend, hoping for nothing again; and where nothing is to be had, will not be rigorous nor extreme in demanding their right: and shall not the Father of mercies take pity on the miserable? He who is good, and therefore ready to forgive; merciful and gracious,[e] and therefore removes our transgressions from us as far as the east is from the west.[f] He is a God with whom that plea is of force, *What profit is there in my blood?* And whose soul was grieved for the misery of Israel,[g] though they brought it upon themselves by their own sin and folly.

Well, it is true that God is infinitely good, and we have abundant reason to hope in his mercy, and abundant encouragement to plead it with him; but it is as true that he is just and righteous, that he is the great Governor of the world, and the honour of his government must be maintained; his injured justice calls for satisfaction, and one attribute of his shall not be glorified by the damage and reproach of another. It is true, he is merciful, and yet there is a world of angels who lie, and are like to lie for ever, under the pouring out of the full vials of his wrath; and therefore, though his goodness and mercy, as it is revealed to us in the Scripture, is our great encouragement, yet,

(2.) We are to ground our expectations upon the *mediation of our Lord Jesus*. Therefore God forgives our debt, because Jesus Christ, by the blood of his cross, has made satisfaction for it, and given his life a ransom for ours: which is so far from lessening the freeness of that grace which forgives us, that it greatly magnifies it, for it was he himself who found the ransom,[h] it was he himself who gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.[i] And herein more than in any thing he commended his love,[k] that he would not only forgive our debt, but put himself to such vast expense of blood and treasure, that he might do it so as to secure, nay to declare, his righteousness; *to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness;* (such an emphasis does the apostle lay upon this;) that he might be not only merciful but just, and the justifier of them who believe in Jesus.[l] If sinners are debtors, it is Christ who is their surety, upon the account of whose satisfaction their debt is forgiven: Christ is called *the surety of the covenant*;[m] not that

x Job xxxiii. 28. y Eph. i. 6, 7. z Acts ii. 38. a Matt. xviii. 25. b Isa. xlix. 24. c Ezek. xxxiv. 6, 7. d Matt. xviii. 27. e Ps. lxxxvi. 5. f Ps. ciii. 8, 12. g Judg. x. 16. h Job xxxiii. 24. i 1 John iv. 10. k Rom. v. 8. l Rom. iii. 25, 26. m Heb. vii. 22.

he was originally bound in the bond with us, as if it were implied in the penalty annexed to the covenant of innocency, which was, *Thou shalt surely die*, that is, *thou or thy surety*. No, Christ's undertaking supposes us already debtors, and under arrest for the debt; so that Christ comes in rather as bail to the action, than as a secondary undertaker from the beginning. His office as mediator takes it for granted, that God and man are at variance, for a *mediator is not of one*;[n] we are looked upon as under the law, that is, under the curse, when Christ to redeem us makes himself sin and a curse for us.[o] Let us see how this is done.

[1.] Our Lord Jesus voluntarily undertook to be a surety for us: pitying our deplorable case, and concerned for his Father's injured honour, that divine justice might be satisfied, and yet sinners saved, he offered to make his own soul a sacrifice for sin, and himself a propitiation, answering the demands of the law, as the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, exactly answered the dimensions of the ark. The Father intrusted him with this great piece of service, and he voluntarily and cheerfully consented to it: he said, *Lo, I come*, and not only did this will of God, but delighted to do it;[p] drawn to it, and held to it, with no other cords but those of his own love, and the agreeableness of his undertaking to his Father's commandment.

Christ had no debt of his own to pay, for he always did those things that pleased his Father. Such was the dignity of his person, and such the value of the price he paid, that he had wherewithal to make full satisfaction, and to pay this debt, even to the last mite. He said, *Upon me be the curse*, my Father. Thus he became bound for us, as Paul for Onesimus to Philemon his master: If *he have wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, I Paul have written it with my own hand*, the blessed Jesus has written it with his own blood, *I will repay it*.[q] And this undertaking of Christ's shall redound more to the glory of God, even to the glory of his justice, than the damnation of these sinners would have done; for if they had perished, the righteousness of God would have been, to eternity, but *in the satisfying*; but now, by the merit of Christ's death, it is once for all *satisfied*, and reconciliation made for iniquity. Thus he *restored that which he took not away*.[r]

Let us pause a little, and think with wonder and thankfulness of this glorious undertaking. How great was that kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man, which set this work going! How admirable the wisdom that contrived it! *The wisdom of God in a mystery*.[s] Let every crown be thrown at the Redeemer's feet, and every song sung to his praise. *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto God*,[t] as a surety for us? It is he who speaks in righteousness, and will never unsay what he has said, for he is mighty to save,[u] he is almighty.

[2.] Having made himself a surety for us, he made full satisfaction to divine justice for our debt, by the blood of his cross. He poured out his soul unto death,[v] not only for our good, but in our stead; and paid, though not the *idem—the same*, that we should have paid, yet the *tantundem—the equivalent*, that which was more than equivalent; so that in him God might be said to have received double for all our sins,[w] so much was the Father glorified in him.

God charged the debt upon him, according to his undertaking. Those he undertook for being insolvent, the action was brought against him; and God laid upon him the iniquity of us all;[x] made it all to *meet upon him*, (so the word is,) as the sins of all Israel were made to meet upon the head of the goat, that on the day of atonement was to be sent into a land of forgetfulness.[y] Solomon says, *He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it*, shall be broken by it: our Lord Jesus being surety for us who were strangers and foreigners, he smarted for it;[z] for it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief

He voluntarily and freely paid the debt; his life was not forced from him, but he laid it down of himself.[b] The satisfaction was to be made *to God in his* HONOUR; for in that he had been injured, and to that he had an eye, when he said, *Father, glorify thy name*,[c] take the satisfaction that is demanded. And it was to be made by *his death*, for without shedding of blood, that blood which is the life, there was no remission; and, therefore, he laid down his life with these words, *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit*;[d] that life, that soul, which is to be given as a ransom for many, I here give to thee; I put it into thy hands, as the surety pays the debt into the hands of the creditor, the proper person to receive it.

[3.] The satisfaction which Christ made for our sins was graciously accepted, and God was so well pleased in him,[e] as to be well pleased with us in him. This was a further act of divine grace; for in strict justice it might have been insisted on, that the law should have had its course against the sinners themselves. Christ intimated, that pursuant to the counsels of peace,[f] which were between the Father and him, concerning man's redemption, his arrest should be our discharge, when he said to those who seized him in the garden, *If ye seek me, let these go their way*.[g] He delivered up himself to suffer and die, that we might be delivered from wrath and ruin, and divine justice agreed to it.

n Gal. iii. 20. o Gal. iii. 10, 13. p Ps. xl. 7. q Phil. 18. 19.
r Ps. lxix. 4. s 1 Cor. ii. 7. t Jer. xxx. 21.
u Isa. liii. 1. v Isa. liii. 12. w Isa. xl. 2.

x Isa. liii. 6. y Lev. xvi. 21. z Prov. xi. 15. a Isa. liii. 10.
b John x. 18. c John xii. 28. d Luke xxiii. 45.
e Matt. xvii. 5. f Zech. vi. 13. g John xviii. 8.

In token of the acceptance of his satisfaction, God raised him from the dead, sent an angel to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and so to release the prisoner; which he did, and then sat upon it[h] in triumph, signifying that then death had no more dominion over him, but was perfectly conquered and abolished. But are we certain that he had a fair discharge? Yes, for he was often seen alive, seen at liberty, and the Father having raised him from the dead, set him at his own right hand, which would have been no place for him, if he had not fully made good his undertaking. Christ's death being the payment of our debt, for he was delivered for our offences, his resurrection was the taking out of our acquittance, for he rose again for our justification.[i] Therefore the apostle lays the stress of our faith, hope, and comfort upon this, *Who is he that shall condemn?* Who can take out an execution against us? *It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again*:[k] by which it appears that his dying for us was accepted, especially since he now is even at the right hand of God making intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction; and it is an effectual intercession, for the Father hears him always.

[4.] The satisfaction being accepted, a release of debts is published and proclaimed in the everlasting gospel to all penitent and obedient believers. Full assurance is given them that their sins shall be pardoned, and they shall be made accepted in the Beloved. The preaching of the gospel is called the *proclaiming of the acceptable year of the Lord*,[l] in allusion to the year of release, which was every seventh; and, especially, to the year of jubilee, which was every fiftieth;[m] when all debts were discharged, mortgaged possessions restored, and all encumbrances on men's estates taken off. And this was proclaimed by sound of trumpet in the evening of the day of atonement, to signify, that upon the account of the atonement which Christ was to make, poor sinners should be delivered from that wrath and curse to which they were bound over, and brought into the glorious liberty of God's children, and restored to all the glorious privileges and inheritances of free-born Israelites. *Blessed is the people that hear this joyful sound*,[n] the trumpet of the everlasting gospel publishing this release, this act of indemnity, *liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound.*

These glad tidings of great joy are to be brought to all people; whoever will come and take the benefit of this general release, and sue out a particular discharge upon it, on very easy and unexceptionable terms; for the gospel excludes none, who do not by their own wilful impenitence and unbelief exclude themselves. Nay, we have not only this discharge offered us, but we are courted, and earnestly invited, to come in and accept of it. God having in Christ laid a foundation for the reconciling the world unto himself, has sent his ambassadors, not only to propose the matter to us, but to beseech us, nay, God does by them *beseech us to be reconciled to God*,[o] though it had better become us to beseech him first to be reconciled to us.

[5.] It is upon the account of Christ's satisfaction, that our sins are actually pardoned upon our repenting and believing; and that is it which we are to plead with God, and to rely upon as a valid plea in our prayers to God for the forgiveness of our debts. In *his* righteousness we must appear before God; making mention of that, even of that only, and not thinking to justify ourselves.[p] It is through his blood that we have redemption, even the remission of sins,[q] for that is it which, having been shed for us without the city, speaks for us within the veil, and speaks better things than that of Abel;[r] and he still appears *in the midst of the throne*, a Lamb *as it had been slain*,[s] newly slain, and bleeding afresh, to intimate the constant perpetual virtue of his satisfaction, and the continual advantage which believers have and may have by it.

In praying for the forgiveness of our sins, we must have an eye to Christ as our Redeemer; the Redeemer of our persons that were in bondage, and of our inheritance which was in mortgage. He is our *Goel;* Job calls him so, and the prophets often: it is the title of the next *kinsman;* who by the law was to redeem the possession which his brother sold.[t] Christ having taken our nature upon him, is become our kinsman, and he is the next kinsman who is able to redeem, so that to him the right of redemption does belong: and he has graciously condescended to do the kinsman's part; so that we return to our inheritance again, from which we had otherwise been for ever banished; and have the earnest of it until the complete redemption of the purchased possession.[u] We must also in a particular manner have an eye to his death as our ransom: for the sake of which we are delivered from going down to the pit.[v] Very fitly therefore is that sacrament which is the memorial of his death, made the seal of our pardon.

3. Having showed you how sad your case is upon the account of sin, and what a dangerous debt it is; and yet that your case is not desperate, but there is hope for you through grace, I promise myself, you will now be willing and glad to hear, *what is expected and required from you*, that you may obtain this favour, and that your debts may be forgiven. Christ, as a surety for us, has made satisfaction; but what must we do that we may have an interest in that satisfaction? It is true that atonement is made for sin, and is accepted as sufficient to ground a

h Matt. xxviii. 2. i Rom. iv. 25. k Rom. viii. 34. l Luke iv. 19. m Lev. 25, 9, 10. n Ps. lxxxix. 15. o 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. p Ps. lxxi. 16. q Eph. i. 7. r Heb. xii. 24. s Rev. v. 6. t Lev. xxv. 25. u Eph. i. 14. v Job xxxiii. 24.

treaty of peace upon; and yet it is as true, that multitudes perish eternally under the load of this debt, and continue in their captivity, notwithstanding the proclamation of liberty. It therefore concerns us all to see to it, that we be duly qualified, according to the tenor of the new covenant, for the comforts of a sealed pardon and a settled peace; and that we may be so,

(1.) We must *confess the debt*, with a humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart. We must own ourselves guilty before God, and concluded under sin. Let not those expect to prosper, or recover themselves from under this load, who cover their sins, for they, and they only, who confess and forsake them, shall find mercy.[w] We are charged as debtors, and must not go about to deny the debt, no, nor to excuse or extenuate it; but be ready to acknowledge that we have sinned, and have perverted that which was right, and it profited us not;[x] that we have been both unjust to God and injurious to ourselves, as debtors are.

In confessing the debt we must be particular; must not only own that we are sinners, but, in *this* and *the other* instance, we have sinned; not for information to God, he knows our sins better than we ourselves know them, but for humiliation and warning to ourselves. *I have sinned*, (says David,) *and have done this evil.*[y] *I have sinned*, (says Achan,) *and thus and thus have I done.*[z] And the more particular we are in the acknowledgment of sin, the more comfort we may expect to have in the sense of the pardon. If I can say, "*This* sin I confessed; I trust, through grace, *this* sin is pardoned, and shall not be laid to my charge. But then this confession of sin must be accompanied with true remorse and godly sorrow for it; we must bewail it, and bemoan ourselves because of it; must give glory to God, and take shame to ourselves in making this confession: And as the prodigal when we own we have sinned against God, we must own, that we are no more worthy to be called his children; nay, that it were a righteous thing with him to deliver us to the tormentors. And if we thus judge ourselves, we shall not be judged.

(2.) We must *acknowledge a judgment* of all we have to our Lord Jesus, who has been thus kind to satisfy for our debt. This is one proper act of faith, To resign, surrender, and give up ourselves, our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit; all we are, have, and can do; to be under the direction and government of his word and Spirit, to be devoted to his honour, employed in his service, and disposed of at his will. Our own selves we must give unto the Lord,[a] and to us to live must be Christ: our all must be put into his hands, must be laid at his feet. It is indeed a very poor counter-security, but such as it is he requires it, and is pleased to accept of it, provided we be sincere and faithful in the surrender.

There is good reason why we should do this; for therefore he delivered us out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him;[b] therefore redeemed us, that we might be to him a *peculiar* people, *purified* from sinful works, and *zealous of good works.*[c] Nor can we do better for ourselves, than to give up ourselves entirely to Christ; we are never *more our own*, than when we are *wholly his.* If we resign ourselves to him, it is in trust for the securing of ourselves, and our own true welfare, that we may not again be our own ruin. Thus will he complete his kindness to us, if it be not our own fault: he who was our surety to save us from perishing under the load of guilt we had contracted, will be our trustee, to save us from falling again under the like load; for he has said, *Sin shall not have dominion over you.*[d] Thus will he perfect all that which concerns us;[e] and if we commit ourselves and our all to him, we shall find he is able to keep what we have committed unto him against that day, and he will be found a faithful trustee.

(3.) We must *give to Christ the honour* of our pardon, by relying entirely on his righteousness as our plea for it; acknowledging that other foundation of hope can no man lay,[f] and other fountain of joy can no man open. We must for ever disclaim all dependence upon our own sufficiency, and with the highest satisfaction rest upon Christ only as a complete and all-sufficient Saviour. The great concerns of our immortal souls, our reconciliation to God, and our felicity in him, we must lodge in his hands, by a submission not only to his government, as the *Lord our Ruler*, but to his grace, as *the Lord our Righteousness*, made of God to us *righteousness*,[g] that we might be *made the righteousness of God in him.*[h] For, thus, boasting is for ever excluded, and he that glories must glory in the Lord.

(4.) We must *study what we shall render to him who has loved us, who has so loved us.* Let us mention it to his praise, take all occasions to speak of that great love wherewith he loved us, in purchasing for us the remission of that great debt. We cannot expect an interest in Christ and his righteousness, unless we be willing to own our obligations to him, as those who are sensible the bonds he has loosed us from[i] bind us closely and constantly to him,

(5.) We must *engage ourselves for the future*, that we will render to God the things that are his, and be careful not to run in debt again. If we would find mercy, we must not only confess our sins, but forsake them, and keep close to the way of our duty. Ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well, are the commanded fruits of repentance, and without those

w Prov. xxviii. 13. x Job xxxiii. 27. y Ps. li. 4. z Josh. vii. 20. a 2 Cor. viii. 5. b Luke i. 74, 75. c Titus ii. 14

d Ps. cxxxviii. 8. e 2 Tim. i. 12. f 1 Cor. iii. 11. g 1 Cor. i. 30. h 2 Cor. v. 21. i Ps. cxvi. 16.

we cannot expect the promised fruits of it. Has God graciously remitted us our arrears, let us pay our rent more punctually for time to come. Every day is a rent day with us, and we must be careful, by filling up time with duty, and doing the work of every day in its day, to pay our rent duly; and wherein we come short, balance our accounts with the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin,[k] by a renewed application of the virtue of that to our souls; and thus *keep touch* with him who is, and ever will be, faithful to us. Have we wasted our talents,[l] and so contracted debt, and yet are we still intrusted with them? Let us henceforth be more diligent in the improvement of them, that by the blessing and grace of our Master, our five talents may be made other five, and we may have our Master's approbation, and enter at length into his joy. And let us always remember, that God speaks peace to his people, and to his saints, on this condition, that they do not return again to folly.[m]

(6.) Our forgiving others is made the indispensable condition of our being forgiven of God. Nothing can be more express than this, *If we forgive not men their trespasses, neither will our Father who is in heaven forgive us ours.*[n] For God will have his children to be like him, merciful as he is merciful, and good as he is, even to the evil and unthankful. That servant in the parable, who was rigorous in exacting a small debt from his fellow-servant, by that instance of the hardness of his heart made it to appear, that he was never truly humbled for his own debt to his Lord, that great debt, nor ever truly sensible of his Lord's kindness to him in forgiving it; and therefore, his repentance being counterfeit, his pardon was never ratified, but he was delivered to the tormentors, as a wicked servant.[o]

Let this consideration prevail to pacify the most provoked, and mollify the most severe; let it not only suppress every root of bitterness in us, but extirpate it and pluck it up: let us not harbour the least thoughts of malice and revenge against those who have been any way injurious to us, nor render to any evil for evil, nor be extreme to mark what is done amiss against us; for *what then shall we do, when God riseth up, and when he visiteth, what shall we answer him?*[p]

And now, (brethren,) having very briefly and plainly opened to you this great concern that lies between you and God, I must leave it to you to make the application of what has been said, each of you to yourselves; nay, I hope you have been applying it as we have gone along; for these are things of which none of us can say, They belong not to us. Leave it to you, did I say?—I leave it with God by his Spirit to apply it to all your consciences, that you may be *delivered into the mould* of these great truths. I shall therefore close only with a few words of exhortation upon the whole matter.

1. Do not delay to come to an account with your own consciences, but search diligently and impartially, that you may see how matters stand between you and God. *Consider your ways,*[q] *search and try them.*[r] Commune with your own hearts, saying, *What have I done?* What have I done amiss? Take an account of your debts to God, as all prudent tradesmen do of their debts to those with whom they deal. Think how many the particulars are, how great the sum total is, and what circumstances have enhanced the debt, and run it up to a great height; how exceeding sinful your sins have been, how exceeding hateful to God, and hurtful to yourselves. Put that question to yourselves which the unjust steward put to his lord's debtors, *How much owest thou unto my Lord?* and tell the truth as they did, for themselves; and do not think to impose upon God, by making the matter better than it is, as the steward did for them, writing fifty for a hundred.[s]

2. Be thoroughly convinced of your misery and danger by reason of sin; see process ready to be taken out against you, and consider what is to be done: it is no time to trifle, when all you have is ready to be seized, and if the present season be slipped, you know not how soon the things that belong to your peace may be for ever hid from your eyes, and you will rue your carelessness when it is too late to retrieve what you have lost by it.

3. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with him;[t] make your peace with God, and do it with all speed. You need not *send to desire conditions of peace,*[u] they are offered to you, if you will but accept of them; and they are not only easy but very advantageous. Take the advice which Solomon gives to his son who is insnared in suretyship, *Do this, my son,* that thou mayest deliver thyself, go humble thyself, and thereby thou wilt not only pacify an adversary, but make sure a friend: and give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, till thou hast done this.[v]

4. In order to the making of your peace with God, make sure your interest in Jesus Christ, and make use of him daily for that purpose: retain him of counsel for you in this great cause on which your all depends, and let him be not only your plea but your pleader, for that is his office; *If any man sin,* and so run into debt, *we have an advocate with the Father,*[w] who is ready to appear for us, and attends continually to this very thing. Be advised by him, as the client is by his counsel, and then refer yourselves to him, put your case into his hand and say, *Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me,* when I have nothing to say for myself.

5. Renew your repentance every day for your sins

k 1 John i. 7. l Matt. xxv. 20. m Ps. lxxxv. 8 n Matt. vi. 14, 15
o Matt. xviii. 32, 34. p Job xxxi. 14. q Hag. i. 5.
r Lam. iii. 40. s Luke xvi. 5, 6. t Matt. v. 25.
u Luke xiv. 32. v Prov. vi. 3, 4. w 1 John ii. 1.

of daily infirmity, and be earnest with God in prayer for the pardon of them. Hereby we give to God the glory of his never-failing mercy, which abundantly pardons; and to Christ the glory of his inexhaustible merit and grace; and keep ourselves continually easy by leaving no guilt to lie upon the conscience unrepented of. "Even reckonings (we say) make long friends." And the more we are humbled for our daily sins, and the more we see of our obligation to Christ, and his merit, for the pardon of them, the more watchful we shall be against them, and the more careful to abstain from all appearances of evil, and approaches towards it.

Lastly, Let those to whom much is forgiven, love much.[x] We have all of us much forgiven us, it is a very *great debt* from which we have been discharged: now it may be expected, that we should have our hearts accordingly enlarged in gratitude to him who *first* loved us, who *so* loved us, and gave himself for us, loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood. How shall we express our love to him? What box of precious ointment shall we pour upon his head? What song of love shall we sing to his praise? O that the love of Christ may constrain us[y] to love him, and live to him, who loved us and died for us; to be faithful and constant in our love to him, who having loved his own which were in the world, loveth them unto the end,[z] and will love them all at length into the world of everlasting love.

x Luke vii. 42, 43.

y 2 Cor. v. 14.

z John xiii. 1.

# HOPE AND FEAR BALANCED:

IN

# A SERMON,

## PREACHED AT THE TUESDAY LECTURE, AT SALTERS HALL, JULY, 24TH, 1711.

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PSALM cxlvii. 11.

*The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*

THE dignity and privilege of the righteous, who are God's favourites, here appear bright and blessed, very blessed, very bright; and to an eye of faith, the lustre of them far exceeds even that of crowns and coronets; though their honour like their life is hidden,[a] and, therefore, the world knows them not.[b] What can prove them more great, what more happy, than this, that the God of heaven *takes pleasure* in them?

That God should be *at peace* with any of the children of men, (that degenerate, guilty, and obnoxious race,) is more than we could have expected, considering his justice and holiness; but that he should *take pleasure* in them, should set them apart for himself,[c] gather them in his arms, carry them in his bosom,[d] value them as his peculiar treasure, and make them up as his jewels;[e] this is that which eternity itself will be little enough, and short enough, to be spent in the thankful admiration of. *Lord, what is man that thou shouldst thus magnify him, and set thine heart upon him?*

God takes pleasure in his saints, that is, in his own image upon them: *he rejoiceth in the work of his own hands.*[f] Not that God is capable of receiving any addition to the infinite complacency he takes in himself, and in his own perfections, from any creature; but thus he is pleased to express the favour he bears to his chosen.[g] He *delights not in the strength of a horse*, (so it is said in the foregoing verse,) he *taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.*[h] Princes and great men take delight in these, both for their entertainment, they divert themselves with horse races and foot races, and for their service, they make use of horse guards and foot guards, bring into the field squadrons of horse and battalions of foot, and review their troops with a great deal of satisfaction. But does God do so? No, *he takes pleasure in them that fear him:* he *delights to behold the righteous*,[i] delights to converse with them, invites them into fellowship with himself, and with them his secret is. He delights to employ them, and makes them the instruments of his glory: and herein he magnifies himself, that he has *pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.*[k]

But the CHARACTER here given of God's favourites is THAT for the sake of which I chose this text, and which I shall speak more largely to. They are such as both *fear God*, and *hope in his mercy*. The fear of God I know is often put for all religion; but it being here distinguished from a hope in his mercy, I choose rather to understand it in a more limited sense, as signifying a dread of his majesty.

Fear and hope are passions of the mind so contrary the one to the other, that, with regard to the same object, it is strange they should meet in the same laudable character: yet here we see they do so, and it is the praise of the same persons, that they both fear God, and hope in him.

Whence we may gather this doctrine:

> That in every concern that lies upon our hearts, we should still endeavour to keep the balance even between hope and fear.

We know how much the health of the body depends upon a due temperament of the humours, such as preserves any one from being predominant above the rest; and how much the safety and peace of the nations result from a *due* balance of trade and power, that no one grow too great for its neighbours: and, so necessary is it to the health and welfare of our souls, that there be a due proportion maintained between their powers and passions, and that the one may always be a check upon the other, to keep it

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a Col. iii. 3. b 1 John iii. 1. c Ps. iv. 3.
d Isa. xl. 11. e Mal. iii. 17.

f Ps. civ. 31. g Ps. cvi. 4, 5. h Ps cxlvii. 10.
i Ps. xi. 7. k Ps. xxxv. 27.

from running into extremes; as in these affections mentioned in the text. A holy fear of God must be a check upon our hope, to keep that from swelling into presumption; and a pious hope in God must be a check upon our fear, to keep that from sinking into despondency.

This balance must, I say, by a wise and steady hand, be kept even in every concern that lies upon our hearts, and that we have thoughts about. I shall enumerate those that are of greatest importance.

We must keep up both hope and fear,

I. As to the concerns of our souls, and our spiritual and eternal state.

II. As to our outward concerns, relating to the body, and the life that now is.

III. As to the public concerns of the church of God, and our own land and nation.

In reference to each of these, we must always study and strive to support that affection, whether it be hope or fear, which the present temper of our minds and circumstances of our case make necessary to preserve us from an extreme.

I. Nothing certainly does so much *concern* us, and ought to lie so *near our hearts*, as the *prosperity of our souls*, and their happiness in the favour of God, and their fitness to serve him here, and enjoy him for ever. This certainly ought to be the chief and continual care of every man in this life, to approve himself to an eternal God above him, and to prepare himself for an everlasting state before him, This is the concern of the *better part*, and is of all other the most weighty concern. Now, for the due managing of this concern, it is requisite that we *take our work before us*, and give each part of it its place and due proportion, so as that one devout affection may not intrench upon and exclude another. As the beauty of God's being consists in the harmony of his attributes, so the beauty of his image on our souls consists in the harmony of our graces, and the concurrence of them all to the maintaining of our due subjection to God, and due government of ourselves.

In eternity there is neither hope nor fear. In heaven they are both lost in an endless fruition: glorified saints, as they are for ever *quiet from the fear of evil*, and out of the reach of it, so they have nothing more or better to hope for, than what they are already entered into the enjoyment of; *and what a man sees, why doth he yet hope for?*[l] In hell they are both lost in an endless despair: they have nothing to fear there, where they know the worst, and must *feel* to eternity what they would not *fear*; nor have they any thing to hope for, when the door of mercy is shut against them, and a great gulf fixed between them and all blessedness, never to be removed. But in our present state, there is and must be a mixture both of hope and fear; and we must keep up our communion with God, and do our duty to him by the seasonable exercises of both: and thus we must sing both of mercy and judgment, and *sing unto God* of both.[m]

1. We must keep up both *a holy dread of God, and a humble delight in him*; both a reverence of his majesty, with a fear of incurring his displeasure, and at the same time a joy in his love and grace, and an entire complacency in his beauty and bounty, and that benignity of his which is better than life.

Our affections toward God must correspond with the discoveries he has made of himself to us. As he has proclaimed his name for our instruction, so we must proclaim it to *his praise*. Now in God there is both every thing that is awful, and every thing that is amiable; and in his manifestations of himself he seems to have taken a delight in putting these together, and setting the one over against the other. When he makes himself known in his greatness, *as riding on the heavens, by his name JAH*, he adds, in the next words, this instance of his goodness, that he is *a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge for the widows*.[n] Is he the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, and dwells in the holy place?[o] Yet we must know that with *this* man he will dwell, to *this* man he will look, that is of a contrite and humble spirit.[p] And on the other hand, when he tells us how gracious he is in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin,[q] he tells us presently how just he is also, that he will by no means clear the impenitently guilty.

Thus, therefore, must we have an eye to him, both as he is infinitely great, and greatly to be feared, and as he is infinitely good, and greatly to be loved. And as no *love* one degree short of *perfect* must *cast out all fear*;[r] so no fear, in those who have received the Spirit of adoption, must damp the *delight* which, as children, we must have in *our Father*.[s] We must both fear God's name, and love it; both fear the commandment, and love it. We must delight ourselves always in the Lord; and yet we must make him our fear and our dread,[t] and be in the fear of him every day, and all the day long. In the duties of religious worship, we must know our disparity; and in consideration of that we must serve him with reverence and godly fear,[u] because God, even our God, though he be a rejoicing light to those who serve him faithfully, yet he is a consuming fire to those who trifle with him: but we must also know our privilege, and draw near to him in full assurance of faith, and must serve the Lord with gladness.[v]

2. We must keep up both a *trembling for sin*, and a *triumphing in Christ*, as the *propitiation for sin*. We must be afraid of the curse, and the terrors of it, and yet must rejoice in the covenant, and the

l Rom. viii. 24. m Ps. ci. 1. n Ps. lxviii. 4, 5. o Isa. lvii. 15. p Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. q Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

r 1 John iv. 18. s Ps. xxxvii. 4. t Isa. viii. 13. u Heb. xii. 28. v Heb. x. 22.

riches and graces of it. With one eye we must look at the fiery serpents, and see what danger we are in by our having been stung by them; but with the other eye we must look up to the brazen serpent[n] lifted up on the pole, and see what a fair way we are in of being helped and healed by looking to it. *Look unto me* (saith Christ) *and be ye saved.*

We must not so look upon the comforts of the gospel, as to forget the condemnation of the law, and that we are guilty before God, and liable to that condemnation: which we must be ever mindful of, that we may daily reflect with regret upon sin, and may be quickened to flee from the wrath to come, and to flee for refuge to the hope set before us; and that knowing the terrors of the Lord, we may be persuaded to stand in awe and not sin. And yet we must not so look upon the condemnation of the law, as to forget that we are under grace, and not under the law;[o] and that we have a Redeemer to rejoice in, and with an entire confidence to rely upon, who died to save his people from their sins. We must look upon sin, and be humbled, and be afraid of God's wrath; but at the same time we must look upon Christ, and be satisfied, and hope in his mercy.

3. We must keep up both *a jealousy of ourselves*, and of our own sincerity; and a *grateful thankful sense of God's grace in us*, and the workings of that grace. It is true, the heart of man is deceitful above all things,[p] and in nothing more so than in its judgment of itself. We are all apt to be partial in our own favours; to say *we are rich and increased with goods*, when we do not know, or will not own, that we are wretched and miserable.[q] We have therefore reason to fear lest we should be mistaken, lest our graces should prove counterfeit, and we should be rejected as hypocrites at last. And O that those who live a carnal, worldly, sensual life, under the disguise of a religious profession, were awakened to see their mistake before the flames of hell awaken them! O that fearfulness would surprise those who, indeed, are hypocrites; and that the sinners in Zion were afraid; and that their vain hopes, which are built upon the sand, might be taken down before they are thrown down!

But let not those who fear the Lord, and obey the voice of his servant, walk in darkness, but trust in the name of the Lord, *and* stay themselves upon their God.[r] Let not those who, through grace, are brought to prefer the favour of God before the smiles of the world, and are more in care about the things that relate to the soul and eternity, than about those that have reference only to the body and time; let not their godly jealousy over themselves run into an extreme. Let them not be upon all occasions arraigning their evidences, and questioning, *Is the Lord among us, or is he not?* Hearken to this, you that tremble at God's word, and are fearing continually every day.[s] How can you say you do not love God, when you cannot but say that you would not for all the world wilfully offend him, and that there is nothing you desire so much as to be in his favour, and in communion with him? And therefore, though you have no reason to trust in your own merit, yet you have a great deal of reason to hope in that mercy of God, which accepts the willingness of the spirit, and overlooks the weakness of the flesh.[t] Why should you wrong yourselves by bearing false witness against yourselves; as they do who make themselves poor, and yet have great riches?[u] And why should you wrong God, by robbing him of the honour of what he has wrought for you? It is true, we must not be proud of our graces, but we must be thankful for them; we must not pretend to justify ourselves to the covenant of innocency, for we are not innocent; yet we must not therefore reject the advantages of the covenant of grace, nor put from us the comforts that thence flow.

4. We must keep up both a *constant caution over our goings*, and a *constant confidence in the grace of God.* When we consider how weak we are; how apt to stumble in the way, and wander out of it, apt to tire, and apt to turn aside; we shall see cause enough to walk humbly with God. And yet, when we consider how the promises of divine aids are adapted to our case in all the exigences of it, how rich, how sure they are, and how certainly made good to all those who depend upon them, and by faith derive strength and wisdom from them, we shall see cause enough to walk boldly with God. He who walks uprightly,[y] walks with a good assurance, and may travel in the greatness of the strength of him who is mighty to save.

We have need to stand always upon our guard; as knowing that our way lies through an enemy's country, where we have reason to expect that ambushes will be laid for us, and all the stratagems of war made use of to do us mischief. We have need to look well to our goings, and never so much as to *feed ourselves without fear*,[w] lest our *table* should *become a snare*;[x] nor walk abroad without trembling, lest under the green grass there should be a snake; lest for want of watchfulness we should be surprised by a sudden temptation, for want of resolution we should be overpowered by a violent temptation. *Happy is the man* who thus *feareth always*,[y] as seeing himself never out of the reach, no, nor ever out of the way of Satan's temptations, till he comes to heaven.

But still in the midst of this fear we must hope in God's mercy, that he will take our part against our spiritual enemies, will watch over us for good, will preserve our souls from sin, from every evil work,

n John iii. 14. o Rom. vi. 14. p Jer. xvii. 9.
q Rev. iii. 17. r Isa. l. 10. s Isa. li. 13.
t Mat. xxvi. 41. u Prov. xiii. 7. v Prov. x. 9.
w Jude 12. x Psal. lxix. 22. y Prov. xxviii. 14.

the only thing that can do them any real damage. What Christ said to St. Paul, when he was buffeted by a messenger of Satan, he has said to all who, like him, fly to the mercy of God, and continue instant in prayer: *My grace is sufficient for thee,*[z] though thou hast no strength of thy own that is so. Infinite Wisdom knows what grace thy case calls for; and thou shalt have enough to secure the life and happiness of thy soul, from every thing that aims at its death and ruin. Be strong therefore in the Lord, and in the power of his might; go forth, and go on, in his name; as David against Goliah; and be assured that the God of peace, the God of *your* peace, will, in order to that, be the God of *your victory;* he will tread Satan under your feet, will do it shortly, will do it effectually, that he may be to eternity the God of *your triumphs.*

5. We must keep up both a *holy fear lest we come short,* and a *good hope that through grace we shall persevere.* If we rightly understand ourselves, we cannot but be often looking forward, and considering what will be our last end, what will be our future state. And what will it be? Will *our end* be peace? Will *our endless* condition be a happy one?

Truly when we look upon the brightness of the crown set before us, and our own meanness and unworthiness; when we look upon the many difficulties that lie in our way, and our own weakness, and utter inability to break through them; we may justly be afraid, lest some time or other we be guilty of a fatal miscarriage, and perish at last. And such a fear as this is recommended to us as a means to keep us from apostasy, that we may not really come short, as the unbelieving Israelites did of Canaan: *Let us fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short,*[a] should do any thing that looks like, or tends towards, a drawing back to Egypt again. We have no reason to be secure; many who thought they stood, stood as high, stood as firm as we, yet have fallen, have fallen fatally and irrecoverably. Let us, therefore, who think we stand, take heed lest we fall,[b] and with a holy fear and trembling[c] let us be continually working out our salvation. *Vigilantibus non dormientibus succurrit lex—The vigilant, not the negligent, are favoured by the law.*

Yet let not this fear degenerate into amazement, nor take off our chariot wheels, or make us drive heavily. While we fear lest God should leave us to ourselves, and put us into the hand of our own counsels, as justly he might, and then we are undone, let us hope in his mercy, that having begun a good work in us he will perform it. If it be the work of his own hands he will not forsake it, nay, he will perfect it, if it be indeed that which truly concerns us.[d] The same apostle who bids us fear lest we come short, bids us give diligence to a full assurance of hope unto the end;[e] for *faithful is he that has called us, faithful is he that has promised,* who will perform his promise, and perfect his call. To him, therefore, let us commit the keeping of our souls in well doing, the greatest trust to the best trustee; and then let it be our comfort that we *know whom we have trusted,* even one who *is able to keep what we have committed to him against that day,*[f] when it shall be called for.

Thus you see how in the great concerns of our souls there is occasion both for hope and fear, and each have their work to do, so that the two extremes of presumption and despair, those dangerous rocks, may be avoided. This is the levelling work by which the way of the Lord is to be prepared: by a good hope, every valley shall be exalted, and by a holy fear, every mountain and hill shall be brought low.[g] And thus the glory of the Lord being revealed, all flesh shall see it together.

II. The balance must likewise be kept even between hope and fear, as to our *temporal concerns,* about which we cannot be wholly unconcerned. Many cares we have upon our hearts about our life, health, ease, and safety; about our callings and estates, and the prosperity of them; our reputation and interest among men; our relations and families, and our comfort in them: all these we hold between hope and fear, and must take heed, that when things look ever so hopeful we be not rocked asleep in security; and when they look ever so frightful, we do not faint away in despondency.

1. When the world smiles upon us, and our affairs in it prosper, yet then we must keep up a holy fear, and not be too confident in our pleasing prospects; not flatter ourselves with hopes of the great advancement and long continuance of our peace and prosperity; but balance the hopes which sense suggests, with the fears which reason and religion will suggest. When our bodies are in health, and we are in our full strength, the breasts full of milk, and the bones moistened with marrow;[h] when our relations are all agreeable, and such as we could wish; when our affairs are in a good posture, the trade growing, the credit firm, and every thing running in our favour; yet even then we must fear God, and the turns of his providence against us, remembering that in such as fear him he takes pleasure.

Let us not say at such a time, as David said in his prosperity,[i] *I shall never be moved, my mountain stands so strong,* that nothing can stir it, nothing shake a state of health so confirmed, a reputation so established; or as Job said in his prosperity, *I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days as the sand;*[k] or as Babylon in the height of her grandeur, *I shall be a lady for ever,*[l] *I sit as a queen, and shall see no sor-*

z 2 Cor. xii. 9. a Heb. iv. 1. b 1 Cor. x. 12.
c Phil. ii. 12. d Ps. cxxxviii. 8. e Heb. vi. 11.
f 2 Tim. i. 12. g Isa. xl. 3. 4. h Job xxi. 24.
i Ps. xxx. 6. k Job xxix. 18. l Isa. xlvii. 7.

row.[m] Let us never promise ourselves, that because this day smiles upon us, to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant;[n] since we know not what shall be on the morrow, nor what one day may bring forth. Let us not put the evil day far from us, which for ought we know may be very near, and at the door. But, to prevent the security we are in danger of falling into at such a time,

(1.) Let us keep up an awful regard to the sovereignty of the Divine Providence, and its disposals of us and ours. We are in its hands, as clay is in the hand of the potter,[o] to be formed, unformed, new formed, as he pleases. That which seemed designed for a vessel of honour, is either marred, or with one turn of the wheel made a despised vessel, in which there is no pleasure: and shall we say, dare we say, *Why hast thou made me thus?* May not God do what he will with his own creature? and shall he not fulfil his own counsel, *whether we refuse, or whether we choose?*[p] for we are sure he is debtor to no man.

Whatever we have, it was God who gave it us; and we said when we had it, *Blessed be the name of the Lord*,[q] who in a way of sovereignty gave that to us, which he denied to others more deserving: and whatever we lose, it is God who takes it away; and when it is gone, we must say, *Blessed be the name of the Lord*, who in a way of sovereignty takes from us that which he had given us, and does us no wrong; for we are but tenants at will of all our enjoyments, even of life itself, and may be turned out at less than an hour's warning, for our times are in God's hands, not in our own.

It is true, that godliness has the promise of the life that now is; but we must take heed of misunderstanding those promises which relate to temporal good things, which are all made with this implicit proviso, *As far as is for God's glory and our good;* and further than those, if we love either God or ourselves, we shall not desire them. It is promised, that it shall be well with them that fear God; but it is not promised that they shall be always rich and great in the world, always in health, and at ease. It is promised, that no evil shall befall them, nothing that shall do them any real hurt; but it is not promised that no affliction shall befall them, for there may be need, that for a season they should be in heaviness, and it shall be for their advantage.

(2.) Let us keep up a full conviction of the vanity of this world, and the uncertainty of all our enjoyments in it. We are very unapt scholars, if we have not learned, even by our own experience and observation, that there are no pleasures here below that are lasting, but they are all dying things; and that often proves least safe that is most dear. They are as flowers which will soon fade, and the sooner for being much smelled to; as snow which will soon melt, and the sooner for being taken up in our hands, and laid in our bosoms. The things we dote so much upon make themselves wings[r] (though we should not by our own improvidence and prodigality make them wings) and flee away as an eagle towards heaven. And shall we then set our eyes and hearts upon things that are not, the fashion of which passeth away, and we with it?

The things we are so fond of, we call good things, though if we have not grace to use them well, and to do good with them, they are to us good for nothing. But the Scripture calls them *deceitful riches*, and the *mammon of unrighteousness*, because they put a cheat upon those who depend upon them, and trust in them; they are not what they seem, perform not what they promise, nor last so long as one would think they should. What God has graciously promised us in them, they do perform, but not what we foolishly promise ourselves from them: so that if we are deceived, we may thank ourselves; it is our own fault for trusting to them. They perish in the using,[s] much more in the abusing. Let those, therefore, who are rich in this world, receive the apostle's charge, not to trust in uncertain riches, because they are uncertain; nor to lay up their treasure in them, because our estates as well as our bodies are subject, both to diseases, for *moth and rust corrupt* them, and to disasters, for *thieves break through and steal them.* What assurance can we have of, what confidence can we put in, those goods, which may be lost in an instant by the firing of a house, or the foundering of a ship at sea, by the unsuspected fraud of those we deal with, or the overpowering force of those we contend with? How can we call that *our own*, which is so much in *others' hands*, or think to hold *that* fast; when even that which is *in our hand* slips through our fingers like dust, especially if we *grasp it hard.*

(3.) Let us keep up an humble sense of our own undeservings and ill-deservings. We shall see a great deal of reason not to be confident of the continuance of our creature-comforts, when we consider that we are not worthy of the least[t] of them, no, not of the crumbs that fall from the table of common providence; and if we were not worthy to have them, much less are we worthy to have them long, and to have them secured to us. Nay, we have forfeited them all a thousand times by our abuse of them; and God might justly take the forfeiture. He who is in debt is continually in fear, lest all he has be suddenly seized on: it is our case; we are in debt to the justice of God, and what can we expect, but to be stript of all?

We had been so long ago, if God had dealt with

[m] Rev. xviii. 7. [n] Isa lvi. 12. [o] Jer. xviii. 4, 6. [p] Job xxxiv. 33. [q] Job i. 21. [r] Prov. xxiii. 5. [s] Col. ii. 22. [t] Gen. xxxii. 10.

us according to our sins; so that we have lived all our days upon forfeited favours, which therefore we can have no assurance of the continuance of.

Though we have the testimony of our consciences for us, that what we have we have got honestly, and not by fraud and oppression; and that we have used it charitably, and in some measure honoured God with it, which is the likeliest way both to secure it and to increase it; yet even then we must not be secure, for God has seen that amiss in us, which we have not seen in ourselves; and there is none who can say, *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin.* We have all contracted guilt enough, to justify God in depriving us of all our comforts in this world; and, therefore, have no reason to be confident of the continuance of them, but a great deal of reason, whatever we lose, to say, *The Lord is righteous.*

(4.) Let us keep up a lively expectation of troubles and changes in this changeable, troublesome world. It is what we are bid to count upon, and can look for no other in a wilderness. *Time and chance happen to all;* why then should they not happen to us? The *race is not* sure *to the swift*, nor *the battle to the strong*, no, nor so much as *bread to the wise*, much less *riches to men of understanding*, or *favour to men of skill.*[u] Why then should we think them sure to us? Can you and I imagine that the world should be more kind and more constant to us, than it has been to those who went before us? You have read the story of Job, whom the rising sun saw the richest of all the men of the East, but the setting sun left poor, to a proverb. You have in your own time seen those who were once worth thousands, so reduced that they and theirs have wanted necessary food: and what exemption can we pretend to from the common calamities of human life? We are not better than our fathers, nor better than our predecessors. Shall we think our prosperity more firm than that of others has been? We might as well think that the earth should be forsaken for us, and the rock removed out of its place.

Nay, troubles and changes are good for us, they are necessary for us; the temper, or rather the distemper, of our minds make them so, lest we grow proud and secure, and in love with this world. We read of those who have no changes, and therefore they fear not God; who are not in trouble as other men,[v] and therefore pride compasses them about as a chain.[w] Moab has been at ease from his youth,[x] and has not by changes and troubles been emptied from vessel to vessel; and therefore he is *settled on his lees*, is grown secure and sensual, he is unhumbled and unreformed, *his taste remains in him, and his scent is not changed.* We have therefore reason to expect that God will in love to us exercise us with crosses and afflictions, that he may remind us what we are, and what we have done amiss, may wean us from this world, and draw out our thoughts and affections toward that world, the comforts of which know no changes.

(5.) Let us keep up serious thoughts of death approaching, and of our speedy removal to another world. Though the comforts we enjoy should not be taken from us, though we were ever so sure they should not, yet we know not how soon we may be taken from them, and then, how long soever they may last, they are ours no longer. Do we not perceive how frail our nature is? Are we not in deaths often, in deaths always, in death even in the midst of life? Do we not see ourselves, wherever we are, standing upon the brink of eternity, and our souls continually in our hands? And what good have we then to look for in this world, who are hastening apace out of it, and can carry nothing away with us? *What is our strength that we should hope?*[y] If we wait for a larger and finer house than what we now live in upon earth, before it falls to us perhaps the grave may be our house, and we may make our bed in the darkness. And when our days are past, with them our purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of our heart; we and our hope go down together to the bars of the pit, when our rest is in the dust.[z]

Death will put a period to all our hopes in this world, and to all our enjoyments: how loose therefore should we sit to them, when life itself hangs so loose! He who said, *Soul, take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years, eat, drink, and be merry*, was by this proved a fool, that *that* very night his *soul* was by death *required of him*;[a] and then *whose shall all these things be* which he has *provided*, and promised himself so much from? None of his we may be sure. Let us therefore be so wise as to consider our latter end, and be daily mindful of it, and then we shall not be such fools as to rely upon any thing in this world for a portion and happiness: we see we have here no continuing city, let us therefore seek and look for one that is to come.[b]

Let me now press this caution upon those whose hopes are most apt to rise high from this world, that in order to the keeping of the balance even, they may maintain a holy fear, and not grow secure:

[1.] You who are young, and setting out in the world, must be reminded not to expect great things in it. You hope you shall do as well as the best; but it may prove otherwise, that you may fare in it as ill as the worst. You are apt to look at the things of the world through that end of the perspective glass that magnifies them, and to count upon having every thing to your mind, as if there were nothing but prizes in the world's lottery; and so lay a foundation for the greater grief in the disappointment, when whatever prizes others may have, you, perhaps, may have

u Eccl. ix. 11. v Ps. lv. 19.
w Ps. lxxiii. 5, 6. x Jer. xlviii. 11.
y Job vi. 11. z Job xvii. 11, 13, 16.
a Luke xii. 19, 20. b Heb. xiii. 14.

nothing but blanks to your share: and then it will be *folly* "to curse your stars," (as some profanely speak,) but *justice* to reproach yourselves for building so high on a sandy foundation, and promising yourselves satisfaction of spirit, in that which you were many a time told had nothing in it but vanity and vexation of spirit. Think not too well of yourselves, for then you are apt to prognosticate nothing but good to yourselves; but lay yourselves low, and then you will lay your expectations low.

[2.] You who are rich, and have abundance of the world, do not make that abundance *your strong city*, and a *high wall*;[c] for it is not so really, but only in your own conceit, and you may soon find it as a *bowing wall*, and a *tottering fence*; a broken reed, which will not only fail under you, but will run into your hand and pierce it. Keep up such a fear of God and his providence, as may forbid you ever to say unto the gold, *Thou art my hope*;[d] and to the fine gold, *Thou art my confidence*; for *if the Lord do not help you*, much more if he turn to be your enemy, and fight against you, whence can the world help you, *out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press*,[e] out *of the farms*, or out *of the merchandise?*

[3.] You who are cheerful and gay, and cast away care, who walk in the way of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes, and withhold not yourselves from any joy, let the fear of God be a check to your mirth, and restrain it from growing into an excess. You may perhaps take care that in laughter your hearts shall not be sad,[f] but the end of this mirth may be heaviness before you are aware. When you rejoice in hope of the glory of God, that hope will not make you ashamed; but when you rejoice in hope of the wealth, and pomp, and pleasures of this world, you have *now* reason to be ashamed that you place your happiness in such things, and will *at length* be ashamed that you looked for so much from them. You are but *girding on* the harness, and therefore boast not, as though you had *put it off*;[g] *be not high-minded, but fear*; and look for *that*, every day, which *may* come any day.

2. When the world frowns upon us, and we are crossed, and disappointed, and perplexed in our affairs, then we must keep up a good hope, and not be inordinately cast down, no, not in our *melancholy* prospects, about our health, our safety, our name, our relations, and our effects in the world. We must not at any time burthen ourselves with distracting care, what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed;[h] but cast this care upon God, and depend upon him to care for us.[i] We must not in the worst of times torment ourselves with amazing fear, as if every thing that threatens us must needs ruin us, and every fresh gale would be a storm presently; and as if every mole-hill of difficulty in our way were an insuperable mountain. How black soever things look, and how low soever we are brought, we must not allow ourselves in fearing more than there is cause, nor more than is meet; we must not frighten ourselves with the creatures of our own imagination, nor suffer our fears to disquiet our minds, and deprive us of the government and enjoyment of ourselves, to damp our joy in God, to disturb our communion with him, and discourage our dependence on him.

But when fear weighs down the balance on that side, let us endeavour to keep it even, to keep it from sinking into despair, by maintaining a holy confidence in God, even as to our outward affairs: and when we are warned to *get ready for the worst*, we must still *hope the best*; hope that things are not so bad as they seem to be, that they will not be so bad as they are feared to be; and that in due time they will be better than they are. And let this hope keep our head above water, when we are ready to sink into despair; let it enable us to check ourselves for being cast down and disquieted;[k] for as bad as things are, if we *hope in God*, we shall *yet praise him.*

(1.) Hope in God's power: be fully assured of this, that how imminent soever the danger is, he can prevent it; how great soever the straits are, he can extricate us out of them, can find out a way for us in an untracked wilderness, and open springs of water to us in a dry and barren land: for with him *nothing* is *impossible*, nor is his *arm* ever *shortened*, nor his wisdom nonplused. Let us honour God, by a firm belief of his omnipotence; *Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me whole, thou canst make me clean*, thou canst raise me up from a low estate, and raise up friends for me when I am most forlorn; by trusting in him as a God all-sufficient when creatures fail, and whom we may rejoice in as the God of our salvation, though the fig-tree do not blossom, and there be no fruit in the vine. The murmuring Israelites did not in any thing affront God so much as in saying, *Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?*[l] *Can he give bread also?* As if any thing was too hard for the Lord.

(2.) Hope in his providence; and believe not only that he *can* do *any thing*, but that he *does* do *every thing*; and whatever the event is, God does therein *perform the thing that is appointed for us*,[m] and takes cognizance of us and our affairs, how mean and despicable soever we are. The great God has all hearts in his hand, their hearts particularly that you have dealings with and dependence on. The ships on board of which your effects are, though they are *afar off upon the sea*, are under God's eye; and he is the confidence of *all the ends of the earth*,[n] the remotest plantations where your concerns lie. And

c Prov. xviii. 11. d Job xxxi. 24. e 2 Kings vi. 27.
f Prov. xiv. 13. g 1 Kings xx. 11. h Matt. vi. 26.
i 1 Pet. v. 7. k Ps. xlii. 5. l Ps. lxxviii. 19.
m Job xxv. 14. n Ps. lxv. 5.

shall not that God who governs the world, be intrusted with the disposal of your concerns?

Hope in the *usual method* of Providence, which sets prosperity and adversity *one over against the other;* and when the ebb is at the lowest makes the tide to turn, and the day to dawn when the night is at the darkest. It is the glory of Providence to help the helpless, to raise the poor out of the dust, and bring back even from the gates of death; to breathe upon dry bones, and say unto them, *Live.* Let this encourage us to hope, that when things are at the worst they will mend; and therefore, as in the heights of prosperity we must rejoice as though we rejoiced not, so in the depths of adversity we must weep as though we wept not; *non si male, nunc et olim, sic erit—not as though, because circumstances have been and are adverse, they are ever to remain so.* God generally comforts his people, according to the time that he has afflicted them.[o]

(3.) Hope in his pity and tender compassions; which in the day of your grief and fear, you are to look upon yourselves as the proper objects of. The text directs us particularly to hope in his mercy; we must depend upon the goodness of his nature for that which we have not an express promise for. Let this silence our fear, that the God in whose hand our times are, is gracious and merciful, does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, much less his own children, but when there is cause, and when there is need, and therefore will not always chide, will not contend for ever; but though he cause grief, he will have compassion.[p] We may with a good assurance *fall into the hands of the Lord,* (and whose hands soever we fall into, they are *his* hands,) for we know that his mercies are great, and those who hope in them shall find them so.

(4.) Hope in his promise; that word of his upon which he hath caused us to hope, and which we have all the reason in the world to build upon,[q] for not one *iota* or tittle of it shall fall to the ground. Though he has not promised to deliver us from that *particular* evil we have a dread of, or to give us that *particular* comfort and success we are desirous of, yet he has promised that nothing shall harm them who are followers of him; nay, that all things shall work together for good to them;[r] and (which is enough to silence all our fears) that though our calamities may separate us from the dearest comfort and comforters we have in this world, yet they shall never be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,[s] from divine comforts, and the divine Comforter.

And now, who is there here that stands in need of this caution against despondency of spirit under discouraging events, and to whom it is seasonable to recommend a believing hope for the balancing and silencing of their distrustful fears? Let them apply this to themselves, and make use of the hope recommended to them as an anchor of the soul,[t] to keep them steady in a storm.

[1.] You who are beginning the world with fear and trembling, who are humble, and honest, and diligent, but have little to begin with, have many difficulties to break through, and are very diffident of your own understanding; be not discouraged, but hope in God's mercy. Your friends are few, unable to help you, or unkind and regardless of you; father and mother have perhaps forsaken you.[u] Know then that you are the particular care of Providence, which gathers the outcasts, and provides even for young ravens, when they are deserted. *Trust in the Lord,* therefore, *and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land;* and though thou be not feasted, yet *verily thou shalt be fed.*[v] Though the beginning be small, the latter end may by the blessing of God greatly increase,[w] and a little one may become a thousand.

[2.] You who have concerns that lie at hazard, in danger at sea, or of being a prey to the enemy; who have debts in bad hands, or dear relations that you have dependence upon, or delight in, in peril; give not way to amazing fear, that fear which has torment, but hope in God's mercy. Give not up any thing for gone, till it is gone: and when it is gone, yet give not up all for gone, as long as you have the good providence of God to trust to. Say not, as David in his haste, *I am cast out of thy sight,* or, *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul;* but wait on the Lord, and be of good courage, resolved to welcome his holy will, whatever it be. We are sometimes told that the merchants are *in pain* for such a ship, such a fleet; you think at such a time, it is only the news of their safe arrival that will put you out of your pain. And what if that news never come? then you condemn yourselves to a lasting uneasiness. But let me recommend that to you, which will make you easy, whatever the event be; commit your way to God, by a believing prayer, and submit your will to God by a penitent resignation; and then let your thoughts be established.

[3.] You who, by the providence of God, are from fulness reduced to straits, have met with losses which you think can never be repaired, and conclude you shall never see a good day again, but are undone to all intents and purposes; do not give way to these desponding thoughts, but hope in the mercy of God, that mercy which brings low, and raises up. As Job's troubles are a warning to those in prosperity not to be secure, so his return to his former splendour, is a warning to those in adversity not to despair. You know not what better times you may yet be reserved for, as Job was, whose latter end God blessed more than his beginning.[x]

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[o] Ps. xc. 15. [p] Lam. iii. 31, 32. [q] Ps. cxix. 49. [r] 1 Pet. iii. 13. [s] Rom. viii. 39.

[t] Heb. vi. 19. [u] Ps. xxvii. 10. [v] Ps. xxxii. 3. [w] Job viii. 7. [x] Job xlii. 12.

III. I come now briefly to show how the balance must be kept even between hope and fear as to public concerns, both those of the church abroad, and of our own nation. Are not the concerns of the church abroad our concerns? They ought to be so. I hope we all lay them near our hearts, as members of the great body, and hearty well-wishers to its interests, and to the honour and kingdom of its great Head. Are we not in care that the Christian religion may get ground among men, and not lose the ground it has; that it may prevail and rule in its power and purity; that the bounds of the church may be enlarged by the accession both of Jews and Gentiles to it; that the breaches of it may be healed, by the pouring out of a spirit of love and charity upon all who belong to it; that the ordinances of Christ, administered according to the institution of them, may ever be its glory, and upon that glory there may ever be a defence; a cloud created by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, both upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies?[y]

The land of our nativity ought in a particular manner to be dear to us, for in the peace or trouble of that, we have peace[z] or trouble. Is it not our concern, that our liberty and property be secured; that the government flourish; that the public peace and tranquillity be continued; that justice be duly administered; that the power and influence of the nation abroad be advanced; that the trade be protected and increased; but, above all, that the protestant religion be transmitted pure to those who shall come after us; that the bulwarks erected against popery may be strengthened; that atheism, infidelity, and all iniquity, may be made to stop their mouth; that the form of godliness may ever be the beauty of the nation, and the power of it may ever rule in men's hearts and lives? Is it not our concern, that our eyes should still see our teachers, and that they should not again be removed into corners, nor our religious assemblies broken up and scattered? If it be, we cannot but look forward with concern, and while we enjoy peace and liberty at present, be in care about the continuance of them; and in our prospects there cannot but be a mixture of hope and fear, and we must endeavour so to fear the worst, as not to grow secure, and so to hope the best, as not to despond, or be dispirited.

The truth is, we are very apt at some times, when second causes smile a little, to be very sanguine, above what there is reason for, and to conclude, that we shall without fail be in Canaan presently; at other times, when things go not just to our mind, we are apt to be very chagrined, more than there is cause, and to conclude that we shall without remedy be hurried back into Egypt again. This hour we soar, and if the wind turn, next hour we sink; as if when the sun shines we should think it would never rain, and when it rains we should think the sun would never shine out again. And have we not lived long enough in this world to be ashamed both of those hopes and those fears? having often seen ourselves disappointed both in the one and the other; and in the issue things have proved neither so well as we hoped, nor so ill as we feared; so that we have surely at length learned by experience, that it is our wisdom and interest, as well as our duty, to keep the balance even between hope and fear.

1. We have always reason to keep up a holy fear as to public affairs, and to be apprehensive of trouble before us, even when things look most promising. We have no reason, even when we dwell peaceably, as the men of Israel in Solomon's time, to dwell carelessly, as the men of Laish.[a] It is true, and we have a great deal of reason to be thankful for it, that we are a happy people; we have long been blessed with peace and plenty at home, and with victory and success abroad; we live under a very good government, which seeks the welfare of our people, speaking peace to all their seed; we have long sitten every one under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree; we have long enjoyed the free exercise of our religion, and great plenty of the means of grace, and there has been none to make us afraid. Our fleece has been wet with the dews of heaven, when that of other nations has been dry: while theirs also has been wet with showers of blood, ours has been dry.

Shall England then say, *I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow?* By no means. Happy is the man that still feareth, as David, whose flesh trembled for fear of God;[b] and notwithstanding the many mercies he had received from him, was afraid of his judgments. And we have reason to be so; for,

(1.) We are a provoking people. Atheism and profaneness abound among us, notwithstanding the testimonies borne against them, and the endeavours used to suppress them. Vice is become fashionable and epidemical; all flesh have corrupted their way; *the whole head sick, the whole heart faint.* How is God's name dishonoured, his day profaned, his good creatures abused to luxury and excess; and how does the unclean spirit range through the land! Liberty to sin has been pleaded for as *Christian liberty*, and the societies for reformation branded as *illegal inquisitions*, and their pious endeavours opposed, insulted, and ridiculed. And shall not God visit for these things? *Shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*[c] How can a people who hate to be reformed, hope to be saved?

The great decay of serious godliness among those who run not with others to an excess of riot, is likewise a very threatening symptom. If those

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y Isa. iv. 5. z Jer. xxix. 7.

a Judges xviii. 7. b Ps. cxix. 120. c Jer. ix. 9.

grow more insolent who are filling the measure of the nation's guilt by their wickedness, and at the same time those grow more cold and remiss, who should empty it by their prayers and tears, things look very ill indeed. How wofully do the professors of this age degenerate from the zeal and strictness of their predecessors! And such is the corruption of the rising generation in many families, that there is reason to fear a further degeneracy. And if thus we grow worse and worse, what will become of us at last? If thus, as Ezra speaks, the holy seed mingle themselves with, and conform themselves to, the people of these abominations, what may we expect, but that God should be angry with us till he hath consumed us?[d] For our religion sensibly consumes, and a consumption may be as fatal as a stab. Those may be of any religion, who are of no religion.

(2.) We are a divided people, and our divisions give just cause to fear the worst; for what can be expected, but that a kingdom divided against itself should be brought to desolation? It is our enemies' policy to divide us, and our sin and folly to serve their design by our misunderstandings one of another, and disaffection one to another, when we might countermine and defeat it by our mutual love and charity. For the divisions of our Reuben, there cannot but be great thoughts and searchings of heart among all who are concerned for the public welfare. We are in danger of being burnt up by the heats in our own bosoms, and broken to pieces by the blows we give one another; and who can we think will be our deliverers, if we be thus our own destroyers?

It is not so much the difference of sentiment that is threatening, nor the difference of practice according to that sentiment; I never expect to see all wise men of a mind, and good men will not act against their judgment; but that which does us the mischief, is the mismanagement of our differences, our uncharitable censures one of another, and reflections one upon another, our heats and animosities, and party-making, to the destruction, not only of Christian charity, but of common friendship and good neighbourhood. The breach seems wide as the sea, which cannot be healed; and what will be in the end hereof? If we thus bite and devour one another, what can be expected, but that we should be consumed one of another?[e] While our enemies triumph in our divisions, it becomes us to tremble because of them.

(3.) God has told us, that in the world we shall have tribulation; all the disciples of Christ must count upon it, and not flatter themselves with hopes of an uninterrupted tranquillity any where on this side heaven. The church is here militant, its state in this world is a warfare: if it retire sometimes into quarters of refreshment, yet it must expect to be drawn out into the field again next campaign: if it have its intervals of peace, those are intended as breathing times, that it may recruit and gather strength for an encounter with another trouble. Once we read that the land of Israel had rest fourscore years;[f] but we never read afterwards that it had so long a respite. We are in a wilderness, and we must expect to fare no better than the church in the wilderness did,[g] which though sometimes it pitched where there were twelve wells of water,[h] yet presently was where there was no water[i] to drink; and when it removed from the wilderness of Sin, the cloud that was their guide led them to the wilderness of Paran;[k] but still they were in a desert land, where God, though he led them about, yet instructed them. Let the people of God never expect, till they come to heaven, to be out of the reach of evil, and therefore never expect to be perfectly quiet from the fear of it.

Far be it from me to suggest any thing that may create disquieting jealousies; all that I aim at in mentioning these grounds of fear, is, that hereby we may all be awakened to our duty.

[1.] Let us, in consideration hereof, stir up ourselves to pray, and to wrestle with God in prayer, for the turning away of the judgments, which our own sins, and the malice of those who are the enemies of our public peace, threaten us with. Jacob feared Esau his brother, and then prayed, *Deliver me, I pray thee*, from him.[l] Jehoshaphat feared, and then set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaim a fast.[m] Whatever are the grounds of our fear, we know God can remove them; he can turn away ungodliness from Jacob,[n] and then he comes as a Redeemer to Zion.

Let not our prayers for the church of God, and for our own nation, degenerate into a formality; nor let us grow customary in them, as if it were only for fashion' sake, that we prayed for the queen and the government, the preservation of the protestant succession, and the prosperity of the nation and its allies, and (as some vainly drink healths to these) only for a compliment. I fear lest some who join with us in prayer, however in other parts of the service they think themselves somewhat concerned, when we come to that, grow remiss and indifferent, as if that were nothing to them; whereas our Lord Jesus has taught us, before we pray for our daily bread and the pardon of our sins, to pray for the prosperity of his church, that his name may be sanctified, his kingdom may come, and his will be done. Let us therefore not only join heartily with our ministers in prayer for the church of God, and for the nation, but let each of us in our families and

d Ezra ix. 2, 14. e Gal. v. 15. f Judges iii. 30. g Acts vii. 38. h Exod. xv. 27.

i Exod. xvii. 3. k Numb. x. 12. l Gen. xxxii 11. m 2 Chron. xx. 3. n Rom. xi. 26.

closets be intercessors with God for public mercies; let us stand in the gap to turn away his wrath, and give him no rest till he establish, till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.[o]

[2.] Let us, in consideration hereof, do what we can to prevent the judgments that threaten us, by a personal reformation of heart and life, and by contributing what we can in our places to the reformation of others. When God speaks concerning a nation, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy,[p] its turning from sin is the only way to save it from ruin, and that is a sure way. It is the *island of the innocent* that is *delivered by the pureness of their hands.*[q] Let this charity to the public begin at home. Let every Israelite, as once every Ninevite, turn from his evil way; and then who can tell but God will yet return and repent,[r] and leave a blessing behind him? But let not this charity end there; let us appear on the Lord's side; let us act in defence of injured virtue and despised godliness, and do our utmost in humility and sincerity to put vice and profaneness out of countenance. And if we thus return to God in a way of duty, no doubt he will return to us in a way of mercy, and be better to us than our fears.

[3.] Being warned of a deluge coming, let us provide accordingly: let not the warning make us despond and despair. Noah did not; he knew the deluge should not be a final destruction of mankind, but that there would be another world after that which was to be drowned; he knew also that it should go well with him, and his family. With this hope he encouraged himself; but being warned of God concerning it, he was moved with fear, and made provision for it; he walked with God, and they who do so are sure to be hid in the day of the Lord's anger,[s] to be hid either in heaven or under heaven. He prepared an ark, and then was himself saved in it. Christ is our ark, God has prepared in him a refuge for all those who flee to him, and take shelter in him when a deluge comes. Preserve the evidences of your interest in Christ clear and unclouded, and your hopes of eternal life firm and unshaken; lay up a treasure of comforts and experiences; make the name of the Lord your strong tower; his attributes, his promises, your sanctuary, into which you may run and be safe, in which you may rest and be easy, and, then, welcome the will of God, nothing can come amiss.

2. Whatever cause we may see to fear, yet still we must keep up a good hope, as to public affairs. We hear of the threatening powers and policies of our enemies, the heads and horns of the dragon,[t] that makes war with the Lamb. We see the church in many places afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; her adversaries many and mighty, her helpers few and feeble; yet let not our faith and hope fail; it is day, though it be cloudy and dark, and at evening time it shall be light.[u] Let Israel hope in God, and wait for him, as those who wait for the morning; and when the night is long and gloomy, do as Paul's mariners did, cast anchor, and wish for the day.[v] Let us learn to make the best of that which is, and hope the best concerning that which shall be.

Let our hopes always be such a check upon our fears, that they may not prevail to disturb our communion with God, to stop the mouth of prayer, and weaken the hands of honest endeavour. Hearken not to the foolish surmises of danger, nor be put into a fright by evil tidings: *Say not, A confederacy, to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid,* but *make God your fear and your dread.*[w] The more we are governed by the fear of God, the less we shall be disturbed by the fear of man. Nehemiah encouraged the builders of the wall with this, when they were surrounded with enemies, who designed to come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. *Be not afraid of them, remember the Lord which is great and terrible,*[x] greater and more terrible to them than they can be to us, and who will show himself above them in that thing wherein they deal proudly. When you fear continually every day, as if the oppressor in his fury[y] were ready to destroy, you forget the Lord your Maker, and his dominion over all, and the dependence of every creature upon him; which, if you had a due regard to, you would look with contempt upon Sennacherib himself, and would say, *Where is the fury of the oppressor?*

Let me prevail with you at this day to encourage yourselves in the Lord your God as to public affairs. While we fear our own sins, let us hope in God's mercy; for though our iniquities prevail against us, and threaten to stop the current of God's favours, yet as for our transgressions he shall purge them away,[z] and that great obstacle being removed, his favours shall have a free course again. Though the designs of our enemies be laid ever so deep, and their hopes ever so high, yet God can make even their wrath to praise him, and restrain the remainder of it;[a] and therefore take heed and be quiet, fear not, neither be faint-hearted,[b] but hope that things will end well at last.

There are three things which may encourage our hope, and keep the balance even against all our fears, as to the concerns both of the protestant churches abroad, and our own nation.

(1.) The word which God has spoken to us; which (whatever other props our hopes may be supported with) is the great foundation on which they must be built, and then they are fixed. If our hopes be

[o] Isa. lxii. 6, 7. [p] Jer. xviii. 7, 8. [q] Job xxii. 30. [r] Jonah iii. 10. [s] Zeph. ii. 3. [t] Rev. xii. 3. [u] Zech. xiv. 7. [v] Acts xxvii. 29. [w] Isa. viii. 11, 12. [x] Neh. iv. 11, 14. [y] Isa. li. 13. [z] Ps. lxv. 3. [a] Ps. lxxvi. 10. [b] Isa. vii. 4.

grounded on the promise, and our expectations guided by it, they are as the house built on the rock; and the heart that is supported by them is established and cannot be moved.[c] *Si fractus illabatur orbis, impavidum ferient ruinæ—Though the earth be removed, yet will we not fear.*[d] But if our hopes be founded on the ability and agency of creatures, they rise or fall as second causes smile or frown; as the ship upon the water, which is higher or lower, as the tide ebbs or flows. The stocks are as the news is, and then every turn of the wheel otherwise than we would have it, shakes our hopes, and robs us of the comfort of them. Be persuaded therefore to hope for what God had promised, according to the true intent and full extent of the promise, and because he has promised it, and that hope shall be an anchor of the soul sure and stedfast.

Is not this the word which God has spoken, and on which he hath caused us to hope? That the *kingdoms of the world shall become his kingdoms:* That *Christ shall have the heathen given him for his inheritance, and the ends of the earth shall see his salvation.* Has he not said that the *man of sin shall be consumed*, the mystery of iniquity unravelled, and that the New-Testament Babylon shall *sink like a millstone into the mighty waters?* Has he not said, that the day will come when *swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks*, when the *wolf and the lamb shall lie down together*, and there shall be *none to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain?* Has he not said, that *for the oppression of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, he will arise, and set them in safety from those that puff at them?* That *the rod of the wicked shall not always rest on the lot of the righteous*, but *the year of the redeemed will come*, and the *year of recompences for the controversy of Zion?* Has he not said, *that a seed shall serve Christ, which shall be accounted to him for a generation*; that *the name of Christ shall endure for ever*; and that *the church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it?*

This, and a great deal more to this purpose, he has said; and he is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. Has he made the promise, and shall he not make it good? In this therefore let us trust, in this let us triumph,—God has spoken in his holiness; he has given me his word for it, and then I will rejoice; I will divide Sechem, Gilead is mine, Manasseh mine:[e] it is all my own as far as the promise goes, which we must not so much as stagger at.

(2.) The work which God has begun among us. We have reason to hope in God's mercy; for the interest that lies so much upon our hearts, even the interest of religion among us, is the interest of God's own kingdom, which he has set up among us, and will therefore keep up: it is the work of his own hands,[f] which he will never forsake.

Things are not so bad, but, blessed be God, there are some hopeful, favourable symptoms in our case; and none more so, than the national testimonies that are borne against atheism and infidelity, and the threatening growth of deism, Socinianism, and scepticism among us; the complaints that are justly made of the profanation of the Lord's day, and the contempt cast upon the Scripture and divine institutions; of the wretched corruption of manners, and the influence which the profaneness of the stage has upon it. When these things are represented as the real grievances of the nation, and lamented accordingly, surely now there is hope in Israel, concerning this thing,[g] and we may rejoice in that hope.

I trust God has among us a remnant of praying people, a remnant that hold fast their integrity; and with an eye to them God will continue to save us, and will perfect what he has wrought. We may safely argue, as Haman's wife does, for the perfecting of the ruin of our enemies; *If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews*, if the cause be God's, as certainly it is, before whom, before which, thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not, thou canst not, prevail, though thou struggle ever so hard, but shalt surely, shalt irrecoverably, fall before him[h] and it. And we may also argue, as Manoah's wife does, for the preventing of our own ruin; *If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not as at this time have showed us such things as these.*[i] As for God, his work is perfect; if he *bring to the birth, he will cause to bring forth.*[k]

(3.) The wonders which he has wrought for us. When we are encouraging ourselves with hopes that God will ordain peace for us, because he has wrought our work in us;[l] yet this is discouraging, that there are such difficulties in the way, which we think can never be got over. But let us then consider the former times, remember the works of the Lord, and his wonders of old;[m] not only those which our fathers have told us of, but which we have seen in our own days, whereby God's work has been begun, carried on in a surprising way, and by events which we looked not for.

When God had begun to deliver Israel out of Egypt, and conduct them to Canaan by miracles, he expected that in their straits they should depend upon him still to work miracles for their relief, and was displeased at their unbelief if they did not. God has begun to save us, though not by miracles, yet by marvels; and thereby has encouraged us to depend upon him that he will still do wonders for us, rather than the work he has done should be undone again. If a mean and worthless people may be saved by a divine prerogative, why may not a weak and helpless people be saved by a divine omnipotence?

c Ps. cxii. 7, 8. d Ps. xlvi. 2. e Ps. lx. 6, 7.
f Ps. cii. 25. g Ezra x. 2.
h Esth. vi. 13. i Judges xiii. 23. k Isa. lxvi. 9.
l Isa. xxvi. 12. m Ps. lxxvii. 11.

Be of good courage therefore, and hope in God, that we shall yet praise him; stay yourselves upon him, strengthen yourselves in him, look upwards with cheerfulness, and then look forward with satisfaction. Let your hopes quicken your prayers, let them keep you in the way of duty, and enlarge your hearts to run in that way; let them quicken your endeavours in your places, to serve the interests of God's kingdom among us to the utmost of your power; and then let them silence your fears, and make you always easy to yourselves and those about you. Comfort yourselves and one another with this, that the same almighty hand that has laid the foundations of his church among us, will build upon those foundations, will in his own way and time, in his own method, and according to the plan of his own eternal counsels, carry on the building, till at length the top-stone be brought forth with shouting, and we shall cry, *Grace, grace to it.*[a]

[a] Zech. iv. 7.

# A SERMON

CONCERNING

# THE CATECHISING OF YOUTH:

## PREACHED TO MR. HARRIS'S CATECHUMENS, APRIL 7, 1713.

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2 TIMOTHY i. 13.

*Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.*

BLESSED Paul in this, as in the former epistle, giving wholesome advice and instruction to Timothy; for the enforcing of it, among other things, puts him in mind of his education, and the advantages of it; the good principles which by it had been instilled into him, and the good practices he had been trained up in: and upon trial, now he came to years of understanding, he could not but see that they were good. Let him therefore adhere to them, and abide by them, and now build upon the foundation then laid.

He particularly mentions the two great advantages which he was blessed with, in his childhood and youth; that he was bred up, both under the tuition of godly parents, and under the direction and instruction of an able faithful ministry: and both these are requisite to complete the blessings of a religious education.

1. He had been well taught by his godly parents, his grandmother Lois, and his mother Eunice,[a] whose unfeigned faith the apostle would have him frequently to think of, and thereby be minded to stir up the gift of God that was in him.[b] His father was a Greek, one who had little religion in him, but left it to his mother to bring him up as she thought fit; and she and his grandmother were not wanting to season the vessel betimes with a good savour; so that from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, and was made wise to salvation by them.[c] It is a great opportunity, which *mothers* have, and which prudent, pious mothers will improve, to fill the minds of their children, when they are young, with good knowledge, and to form them to a good disposition. If the tree must be bent, it must be done when it is young and tender, and with a very gentle, easy hand, for the spirit is not to be broken but bowed.

2. He had been well taught by St. Paul too. His mother and grandmother had taught him the Scriptures, and made him ready in them, as a child of God; then Paul expounded the Scriptures more fully to him, and by the grace of God made him mighty in them, so that he became a man of God, thoroughly furnished to all good works. The text speaks of the form of sound words, which he had heard of Paul, either in private lectures read to him as his pupil, or in his public teaching and catechising, on which Timothy was constantly and diligently attending.

Now those two methods of instruction, both by parents in their families, and by ministers in more public assemblies, are necessary, and do mutually assist each other, and neither will excuse the want of the other. Let not parents think to leave it wholly to ministers; as if because their children are well taught in public, they need not take any pains with them at home; no, *there* the foundation must be laid, and there the improvement by public catechising must be examined, and *there* a more particular application must be made according to the children's capacities and dispositions, than it is possible for ministers to make in public. The people of Israel had the Levites dispersed among them, whose office it was to teach them the good knowledge of the Lord; and yet it is required of parents that they not only receive God's words into their own hearts, but that they teach them diligently to their children, and talk of them in their families, and tell those under their charge the meaning of the testimonies and judgments which he had commanded them.[d] If father, or

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[a] 2 Tim v. 6. [b] Acts xvi. 1. [c] 2 Tim. iii. 15. [d] Deut. vi. 6, 7, 20.

mother, or both, do not teach their children first, and teach them last too, they will not be fit for, nor much the better by, public catechising.

And on the other hand, let not ministers think to leave it wholly to parents, as if because the children were well taught at home, they needed not to contribute any help of theirs to their instruction. The great Shepherd of the sheep has charged them to feed his lambs[e] with food proper for them. Besides the natural authority and affection of parents, it is fit that the spiritual authority and affection of ministers likewise, should be improved for the advantage of the rising generation. And it may be presumed, that according to the gift given to them, they have greater abilities for instruction than the parents have. In teaching your children other arts and sciences, though you may have some insight into them yourselves, yet you make use of those who particularly profess those arts and sciences, and make it their business to teach them; and will you not do so in that which is the one thing needful for them to learn well. You are to feed your kids, but you must do it beside the shepherds' tents,[f] under the conduct of a gospel ministry.

Now Timothy having had this double advantage, Paul urges him still to proceed in that good way wherein he had so well set out; to hold fast that form of sound words, which he had received.

(1.) This implies that he had a form of sound words delivered to him by Paul; a brief summary of the Christian doctrine, and of all those things which are most surely believed[g] among Christians, as St. Luke expresses it; ὑποτυπωσιν—a *delineation*, a *scheme*, or rough draught of the gospel institutes. It is a metaphor taken from painters; in drawing a face, they first draw the shape and lines of it, and then fill it up with proper colours. Such a model or plan of the truths and law of Christ Timothy had, as he might afterwards, in his meditation and preaching, enlarge upon. Whether this form of sound words was a creed, or confession of faith, I cannot say; I rather think it was in the way of a catechism, because that method of instruction was used in the early ages of the church: for we find it alluded to in St. Peter's ἐπερωτημα—*the answer of a good conscience*,[h] or rather the *interrogation*; so that I think if we apply it, especially to our catechisms, to the forms of sound words so formed, we shall offer no violence at all in the text.

(2.) Here is a charge to him to *hold it fast*, ἐχε—*Have it*. Have it by thee, have it with thee, have it in thee, have it always ready for use; do not part with it, nor in any instance depart from it. *Have it*, that is, make it to appear that thou hast it; as to have grace is to have it in action and exercise, and to him who so has, has and uses what he has, shall be given. Or, as we read it, *Hold it fast*; it was delivered to us, to *have* and to *hold*; and we have it in vain, if we do not hold it.

Accordingly we may hence learn two doctrines.

I. That good catechisms, containing the grounds and principles of the Christian religion, are useful forms of sound words; and it is a great mercy to have heard and learned those forms.

II. Those who have heard and learned the good forms of sound words, must hold them fast in faith and love.

I. It is a very great advantage to young people, to hear and learn the Christian forms of sound words in the days of their youth; to have been well taught some good catechism, or confession of faith. Observe here,

1. The words of the gospel are ὑγιαινοντων—*sound words*, or as some render it, *healthful*, *wholesome*, *healing words*. Put both together, and it intimates,

(1.) That there is *value and validity* in the words of the gospel; as there is in that which is sound and firm, and in good condition. They are what they seem, and there is no cheat in them. Try them; and you will find you may trust them, as you may that which is sound, and will never be made ashamed of your confidence in them. *Men* speak with flattering lips and with a double heart; but the words of the Lord are pure words,[i] and have no mixture of falsehood in them. The law was written in stone, to intimate its stability and perpetuity; and the gospel is no less firm; every iota and tittle of both shall survive heaven and earth.[k]

Assure yourselves, brethren, the words of the gospel which we preach to you, and which you are trained up in the knowledge of, are unchangeable and inviolable. Holy Job's creed concerning his Redeemer, was graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever;[l] much more is ours so; it is what you may venture your souls and your everlasting welfare upon. That is a sound word, That *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*; even the *chief*.[m] And that is a sound word, That *God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son*.[n] It is sound speech that cannot be condemned; for it has been more than a thousand times tried, and it stands firm as the everlasting mountains. *These are the true sayings of God*;[o] and if we compare the traditions of the elders, or the speculations of the philosophers, with them, we shall say, with the prophet, *What is the chaff to the wheat?*[p]

(2.) That there is virtue to be drawn from them for *healing* and *health* to us. They are not only clear from every thing that is hurtful and unwholesome, but there is that, in them, which is medicinal and restorative, not only of health and strength, but of

e John xxi. 15. f Cant. i. 8. g Luke i. 1.
h 1 Pet. iii. 21. i Ps. xii. 2. k Matt. v. 18.
l Job xix. 24, 25. m 1 Tim. i. 15. n 1 Pet. v. 11.
o Rev. xix. 9. p Jer. xxiii. 28.

life itself. These waters of the sanctuary,[q] these leaves of the tree of life, are healing to the nations.[r] These words, if duly applied and mixed with faith, restore the soul, and put it in frame, heal its maladies, and reduce to a just temper its distempered and disordered powers. It was said of old concerning those who were sick, that God sent his word and healed them.[s] And when Christ was here upon earth, it was by the power of his word that he healed all who had need of healing, and in a sense of their need applied themselves to him for it. And this was a figure of the efficacy of the word of the gospel for the healing of diseased souls, a divine power going along with it; and in it the Sun of Righteousness arises in the soul, as it did in the world, with healing under his wings.[t]

Let this therefore recommend to you the words we teach you, that they are not only of inestimable value in themselves, but will be of unspeakable advantage to you. They are healing words indeed; for they are regenerating and recreating words, whereby you may be saved.[u] Mix faith with them, and you will experience the power of them, setting you to rights, and giving you a new life and vigour. They are therefore not only faithful sayings, but well worthy of all acceptation, of *your* acceptation. Accept them therefore, and receive the benefit of them, that you receive not God's grace in vain: and if they be in vain, and you be not healed by them, the fault is in yourselves.

2. It is good to have forms of these sound words drawn up for the use of those who are to learn the first principles of the oracles of God;[v] not to be imposed as of equal authority with the Scriptures, but to be proposed in order to the further study of the Scriptures.

Bear us witness, we set up no other rule of faith and practice, no other oracle, no other touchstone or test of orthodoxy, but the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament: these only are the fountains whence we fetch our knowledge; these only the foundations on which we build our faith and hope; these the *dernier resort* of all our inquiries and appeals in the things of God, for they only are given by divine inspiration. This is the principle we abide by, *To the law and to the testimony;*[w] that is the *regula regulans—the paramount rule*, and far be it from us that we should set up any form of words in competition with it, much less in contradiction to it; or admit any rival with it in the conduct and guardianship of our souls, as some do the traditions of the church, and others, I know not what light within. Every other help we have for our souls we make use of as *regula regulata—a rule controlled*, in subordination and subserviency to the Scripture; and among the rest our catechisms and confessions of faith.

Give me leave to illustrate this by an appeal to the gentlemen of the long robe. They know very well that the common law of England lies in the *Year Book*, and *books of reports*, in the *records of immemorial customs*, and in *cases occasionally adjudged:* which are not an artificial system drawn up by the rules of method, but rather historical collections of what was solemnly discussed, and judiciously delivered, in several reigns, *pro ne natâ—as occasions have arisen*, and always taken for law; and according to which the practice has always been; (with which, if I may be allowed to compare that which, infinitely more sacred and inviolable, cannot be altered or amended by any wisdom or power on earth;) such are the books of the Scripture, histories of the several ages of the church, (as those of the several reigns of the kings,) and of the discoveries of God's mind and will in every age, as there was occasion; and these, too, built upon ancient principles, received and submitted to before these divine annals began to be written.

But though *those* are the fountains and foundations of the law, those gentlemen know that *institutes* and *abridgments, collections of, and references to, the cases adjudged in the books*, are of great use to them, to prepare them for the study of the originals, and to assist them in the application of them, but are not thought to derogate from the authority and honour of them. Such we reckon our forms of sound words to be; if in any thing they mistake the sense of the text, or misapply it, they must be corrected by it; but as far as they agree with it, they are of great use to make it more easy and ready to us.

That which is intended in these forms of sound words, is, not like the council of Trent, to make a new creed, and add it to what we have in the Scripture; but to collect and arrange the truths and laws of God, and to make them familiar.

(1.) By these forms of sound words, the main principles of Christianity, which lie scattered in the Scripture, are collected and brought together. We know that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable, and that there is no idle word in God's book, nothing that is unnecessary; but we know that all is not alike profitable, or alike necessary. Every line in a well drawn picture is of use, and answers some end; but every line is not alike serviceable to the main design of the picture, which is to represent the face of the person whose picture it is, yet we must not say therefore, that it might as well have been spared. The Scripture gives us the things of God in their native purity and plainness, yet not without their proper illustrations. It is *naked* TRUTH, that is, without disguise, and the ambiguity which Apollo's oracles were noted for, but not NAKED *truth*, without dress and ornament.

Now our catechisms and confessions of faith pick

[q] Ezek. xlvii. 8, 9. [r] Rev. xxii. 2. [s] Ps. cvii. 20. [t] Mal. iv. 2. [u] Acts xi. 14. [v] Heb. v. 12. Heb. vi. 1. [w] Isa. viii. 20.

up from the several parts of holy writ, those passages, which though, perhaps, occasionally delivered, contain the essentials of religion, the foundations and main pillars upon which Christianity is built; which we are concerned rightly to understand, and firmly to believe, in the first place, and, then, to go on to perfection. We cannot contain all the Scripture; but there are some more weighty and comprehensive sayings, which (like those which the Jews wrote in their phylacteries) we should bind, for a sign, upon our hand, and which should be as frontlets between our eyes.[x] And our forms of sound words furnish us with these.

(2.) By these, the truths of God are arranged and put in order. The several books of Scripture are written in an excellent method, according as the particular nature and intention of them is, and they are put together in an admirable good order: but when out of them the *main principles* of religion are to be gathered, it is necessary that they be put into some method proper to serve the design of representing them at one view, that we may understand them the more distinctly, by observing their mutual references to each other, their connexion with, and dependence upon, each other; and thereby they appear in their truer light, and fuller lustre.

These forms of sound words show us the order that is in God's words, as well as in his works; the harmony of divine truths, how one thing tends to another, and all centre in Christ, and the glory of God in Christ: and thus, like the stones in an arch, they mutually support, and strengthen, and fix one another. They are as a map of the land of promise, by the help of which we may travel it over with our eye in a little time, and know the true situation of every tribe, though we cannot give a particular description of every part of its inheritance.

(3.) By these, the truths of God are brought down to the capacity of young ones, and those who are as yet but weak in understanding. Not that God has *spoke in secret, in a dark place of the earth*;[y] no, *the words of wisdom's mouth are all plain to him that understandeth*.[z] But to those who are yet babes they need to be explained; to them we must *give the sense, and cause them to understand the reading*;[a] and this is in part done by those forms of sound words, which lead us by the hand as it were into the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Not that we need to seek other words than those which the Holy Ghost teaches; they are the most proper vehicle of the things which are *given us of God to know*,[b] and it is unsafe to depart from them. Many, under pretence of refining upon the Scripture, and expressing the things contained in it more philosophically, have but darkened counsel by words without knowledge:[c] the faithful servant will deliver his message as near as he can in his master's own words; *Go* (says God to Ezekiel) *get thee to the house of Israel; and* do not only speak my words, but *speak with my words to them*.[d]

But spiritual things must be compared with spiritual, and by the plainer parts of Scripture, those must be explained that are more dark and hard to be understood; and this is done by our *forms of sound words*, which make the principles of religion to be as milk for babes, who as yet cannot bear strong meat.[e] The ten commandments are a divine form of sound words to direct our *practice*, but they are short and exceeding comprehensive; it is therefore necessary that we be taught from other Scriptures, what each commandment requires and forbids. The Lord's prayer is another divine form of sound words to direct our *petitions*; but that also is short and comprehensive, and it is requisite we should be taught from other Scriptures, what we pray for in each petition. The form of baptism is another divine form of sound words, peculiar to the Christian dispensation; but that also needs to be explained by other Scriptures, as it is excellently well in the ancient creeds; which we receive and embrace, and greatly rejoice in, as standing, lasting testimonies to the faith once delivered to the saints,[f] which, by the grace of God, we will not only adhere to, but earnestly contend for, and live and die by. And all these divine forms of sound words you have fully and faithfully set before you, and opened to you, in the Assembly's Larger and Shorter Catechism; as, blessed be God, they are in many other, both in our own and other reformed churches.

3. Those are happy who are well taught, and have well learned, those forms of sound words when they are young. It is a great privilege, and a very improving one, to be betimes instructed in the principles of religion, and to have the truths of Christ instilled into us in the days of our youth, and to be trained up in an acquaintance and converse with them from the first; by the care of godly parents especially, who have many advantages in dealing with children which ministers cannot have, to be put betimes upon reading the Scriptures, and getting portions of it by heart; remembering and repeating sermons; to be taught the catechism, and examined in it, and not only made to *say* it, but made, as we are capable, to *understand* it, and taught to *prove* it by Scripture, and give a reason for it; to be directed to pray, and obliged to do it; and to a strict observation of the Lord's day, in order to all this. And if to all this be added *ministerial catechising*, the more copious and accurate explication of the mysteries of God by the appointed stewards of those mysteries, it consummates the happiness of a religious education, from which abundant advantages may be reaped, if it be wisely and faithfully improved.

x Deut. vi. 8. y Isa. xlv. 19. z Prov. viii. 9.
a Neh. viii. 8. b 1 Cor. ii. 13.
c Job xxxviii. 2. d Ezek. iii. 4.
e Heb. v. 12. f Jude 3.

I know I speak to *those* who enjoy this privilege, on whom the doctrine of Christ not only comes down *in showers*, in the preaching of the word, but on whom *it distils* more slowly and softly, *as the dew, and as the small rain upon the tender herb*,[g] in catechising. And I commend your pious zeal in coveting and seeking instruction this way. Go on, and prosper, the Lord is with you while you be with him: and I hope it is a token for good, and will prove so, that God has mercy in store for the next generation,—that there are so many young people among us who are *asking their way to Zion*, and desire to be told it, *with their faces thitherward. Who hath begotten us these?*[h]

I know also there *are* many, and many there *have been*, who were blest with a religious education when they were young, and were then trained up in the way in which they should go, who have afterwards turned aside from the holy commandment; who though they were not *born of fornication*, but were the *seed of the faithful*, yet have proved an unfaithful seed, and have themselves *gone a whoring from their God*. This should not discourage parents and ministers from doing their duty, in catechising youth, but should direct them to look up to God for his grace, without which all our care and pains is fruitless, and we do but beat the air; and should engage *you who are catechised* to be jealous over yourselves, with a godly jealousy, that you may not be conceited of yourselves, or confident in yourselves, may not be *high-minded*, but may always *fear* lest you *seem to come short* of that which is expected from you, or seem to fall off to any evil work or way, and though now you think you stand, may always take heed lest you fall.

But I know that your being thus catechised, if you improve it aright, and be not wanting to yourselves, will be of unspeakable advantage to you; and I hope to be of use, both to direct you and to encourage you, if I tell you how and which way it may be made so.

(1.) Hereby *you are, for some time, well employed now you are young*. Childhood and youth, upon this account, (among others,) are vanity,[i] that so much of the time is then spent to so little purpose, and yet better than, as it is afterwards spent by many, to evil purposes. But your being catechised obliges you to spend at least some part of your time well, and so as you may afterwards reflect upon it with comfort and satisfaction above many other, perhaps above any other, of your precious moments. If the time which children and young people would, *otherwise*, spend in sport and recreation, (they call it PAS[S]-TIME, when we have more need of STAY-times than pastimes, for it passes away fast enough of itself,) is thus happily retrieved, and is spent in good exercises; in conversing with the word of God; (which we should be meditating in day and night,) in reviewing and repeating to ourselves the things of God; we cannot but say that it is a kindness to us, and much greater than it would be, to keep a man from spending an estate wastefully, and put him into a way of getting an estate easily and honourably. Whatever goes with the rest of your time, here is a portion of it spent so as to turn to a good account, and so as you may meet it again with comfort on the other side death and the grave.

Those who are catechised either by their parents or ministers on the *evening* of the Lord's day, have a particular advantage therein: that those precious minutes, (and one minute of sabbath time is worth three of any other day,) which so many young people idle away in foreign, foolish talk, either in the fields, or at the doors of their houses, (which corrupts the mind and manners, and dispels what they had gained, if they had gained any thing, in and by the duties of the day,) they spend in that which serves such good purposes, and will help to clench the nail that has been driven, that it may be a *nail in a sure place*. I know not how young people can be trained up to a better piece of good husbandry, than to a good husbandry of time, especially sabbath time.

(2.) Hereby you will *become better able to understand the word preached, and more capable of profiting by it*, and so it will be a great advantage to you. I am sure it is the duty of ministers to preach the word, and therein to be constant, to be instant in season and out of season, they have [2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.] received a solemn charge to do so; and if so, either you must hear, or they must preach to the walls. And I am sure you are concerned to hear, so that your souls may live; and therefore to take heed how you hear, and, in order to your profiting, to hear with understanding. The *highway* ground in our Saviour's parable, represents those who hear the words of the kingdom, and understand it not;[k] for it is not ploughed up and prepared to receive it; they are not instructed in the things that are spoken of, and therefore such as speak to them of those things are *barbarians*. They who are not catechised, not taught the forms of sound words, apprehend not what we mean when we speak of their misery by nature, the sinfulness of sin, the mediation of Christ, the operations of the Spirit, and the great things of the other world; we had as good talk Greek to them: they are ready to say of us, as the people did of Ezekiel's preaching, *Doth he not speak parables?*[l]

But you who are catechised understand our dialect, are acquainted with Scripture language; for you are accustomed to it, and can say, "This good word is the confirmation, and that the illustration, and the other the application, of what we have many

g Deut. xxxii. 2. h Jer. l. 5. i Eccl. xi. 10.

k Matt. xiii. 19. l Ezek. xx 49.

a time heard, and knew before, but thus are made to know better. And therefore though those who have not been catechized do most *need* instruction, by the preaching of the word; (and for their sakes we must many a time stay to explain things which are most plain, wherein they who are strong ought to bear with us, in compassion to the infirmities of the weak;) yet those who have been well catechised do most *desire* it, and delight in it, and edify by it, because they understand it. Catechising does to the preaching of the word the same good office that John Baptist did to our Saviour; it prepares its way, and makes its paths straight, and yet like him does but say the same things: "*Repent with an eye to the kingdom of heaven.*"

(3.) Hereby *you will have a foundation laid for a good work of grace in your souls.* It is true, that God in his favours to us, and his operations on us, acts as a God, with an incontestable sovereignty, and an irresistible power; but it is as true that he deals with men as men, as reasonable creatures, in a way suited to their nature, he draws with the cords of a man;[m] he gains possession of the will and affections by opening the understanding, informing the judgment, and rectifying its mistakes. And this is entering into the soul, as the good Shepherd, whose own the sheep are, enters into the sheepfold by the door;[n] whereas Satan debauches the affections, and so perverts the will, and bribes and blinds the understanding, which is climbing up another way, for he is a thief and a robber. Christ opens the understanding, and so makes the heart to burn; opens men's eyes, and causes the scales to fall from them; and so turns men from Satan to God.

Now though Christ can give an understanding immediately, as to Paul; yet ordinarily he enlightens it, in the use of means, and gives a knowledge of divine things, by the instructions of parents and ministers; and afterwards by his Spirit and grace brings them home to the mind and conscience, delivers the soul into the mould of them, and by them works a saving change in it. It was the prerogative of an *apostle* to come to the knowledge of the gospel, not by man, nor to be taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ;[o] *we* must come to the knowledge of it, in the way of instituted ordinances; and none more likely to prepare for the particular applications of divine grace, than this particular application of good instruction by catechizing.

(4.) Hereby you will be *armed against the assaults and insinuations of seducers*, and such as lie in wait to deceive, and draw you aside into the paths of error. Satan is a roaring lion, who seeks in this way to devour souls; and none are such an easy prey to him as those who are ignorant and unskilful in the word of righteousness. But those who are well instructed in the forms of sound words, and understand the evidence of divine truths, are aware of the fallacies with which others are beguiled, and know how to detect and escape them, for surely *in vain* is the net spread in the sight of any bird. They who grow in the knowledge of Christ, will not be visibly led away by the error of the wicked, so as to fall from their own stedfastness;[p] those who are thus established when they are children, will not be always *children, tossed about with every wind of doctrine.*[q]

Those who are well catechised, are well fortified against temptations to atheism and infidelity, which, under pretence of FREE-thinking, invite men to FALSE and FOOLISH-thinking; and by *debauching their principles*, corrupt their morals: and which, under pretence of a FREE *conversation*, allure to VICE and IMMORALITY, enslave the soul to the most brutish lusts, and by *corrupting the morals*, debauch the principles. It will likewise be an excellent antidote against the poison of popery; a national zeal against which is, then, likely to be an effectual defence of the protestant religion, when it is a zeal according to knowledge. A right understanding of the *offices* and *ordinances* of Christ, the former of which are daringly usurped, and the latter wickedly corrupted and profaned, in the church of Rome, will, by the blessing of God, preserve us from going in with those strong delusions, though the temptation should be ever so strong, and prepare us to suffer, rather than to sin, if we should be called out to it.

(5.) Hereby you will be *furnished for doing good to others*, in the places where God has set you. Your being well instructed in the forms of sound words, will qualify you to be useful in your generation, for the glory of God, and the edification of many; which will be your honour and comfort now, and will add to your crown hereafter. Out of a good treasure of Christian knowledge well laid up when you are young, you will be able, like the good householder, to *bring forth things new and old*,[r] as there is occasion, for the entertainment and benefit of others. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak.* Hereby you will be able to resist and oppose that evil communication which corrupts good manners, and to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; and not only so, but to advance and keep up that communication which is good, and to the use of edifying,[s] which may manifest grace in your hearts, and minister grace to the hearers. These forms of sound words will teach you that sound spirit which cannot be condemned.[t] And thus your lips will feed many.

It will be likewise of great use to you in prayer; both in secret, and with your families, when God calls you to the charge of families. With what

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m Hos. xi. 4. n John x. 1, 2. o Gal. i. 12. p 2 Pet. iii. 17. q Eph. iv. 14. r Matt. xiii. 52. s Eph. iv. 29. t Tit. ii. 8.

solid judgment, exact method, aptness, and great variety of expression, have I heard private Christians, who have been well instructed in the things of God, and conversant with the Scripture, offer up their prayers and supplications to God, without the help of any other forms, but those forms of sound words; and this with such undissembled indications of pious affection, as has been very proper to kindle and excite, to raise and carry on, the devotions of those who joined with them. I believe some who are pleased to be severe, in their reflections upon all *extemporary prayer*, as we call it, would not be so, if they knew *this* so well as I have done.

(6.) Hereby, *those who have a good work of grace begun in them, will be greatly assisted in the progress of it.* Timothy, by the help of these forms of sound words, is nourished up in faith and good doctrine, whereunto he has attained.[u] They who have pure hearts and clean hands, hereby shall become stronger and stronger[v] in judgment, in affection, and in resolution. The more firmly the foundation is laid, the broader and the higher the building may be carried. And the better we understand the road we are to travel, the better we shall get forward in our journey. Affectionate Christians who are weak in knowledge, have but the wings of a dove that flies low; but knowing Christians are carried on as upon eagles' wings, with which they mount up for the prize of the high calling,—they run and are not weary.

And those who have themselves some good measures of knowledge and grace, may be greatly improved in both, by attending upon public catechising; and if young, by bearing a part in it. Apollos was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures; and he was instructed in the way of the Lord,[w] κατηχημενος—*he was catechised*, so the word is: and he was fervent in spirit, yet he was still willing to learn, and found advantage by it; for there were those who took him, and expounded to him the way of God more perfectly. Those who think they understand the way of God pretty well, yet should still be *increasing with the increase of God*, should not think they have already attained, or are already perfect, but should be pressing forward, and covet to understand the way of God more perfectly.

(7.) Hereby you will *have your memories well stored* for your own use, and will have always good matter ready at hand for pious thoughts and meditations. It is certainly as much the benefit, as it is the duty, of Christians, to converse much in their hearts with the things of God. It is the character of the blessed man, and an evidence of his delighting in the law of God after the inner man, that *in that law he meditates day and night.*[x] *O how do I love it!* says David, *it is my meditation all the day;*[y] it is the subject, not only of my frequent, but of my fixed, thoughts: not now and then, upon an occasion, but constantly. And if David could find such employment and entertainment for his thoughts from morning till night in the law of God, much more may we find satisfaction in it, and the gospel of Christ too, which so far excels it.

Now one reason why this duty of meditation is so much neglected, is, because people want matter for their thoughts to enlarge and expatiate upon; and the reason of that is, because they were never enriched, as they should have been, in all knowledge;[z] their stock is soon exhausted, and they know not what to think of next. But if you get an abundance of good knowledge, you will never have to seek for something proper and useful to entertain yourselves with. You soon forget the sermons you hear; but if your catechism was well learned, and the *proofs* of it, you can never forget *them;* so that you may at any time take an answer of your catechism, and dwell upon that in your thoughts, till your hearts burn within you.

(8.) Hereby you will be *enabled to transmit, pure and entire, to those who come after you, that good thing which is committed to you.* The truths and ordinances of Christ are a sacred deposit, a trust handed down to us by our believing predecessors, and lodged in our hands, to be carefully kept in our day, and faithfully transferred to the generations to come: but how can we do that, if we be not ourselves both rightly and fully apprized of it. We are false to this trust, not only if we *betray* it, by the admission of heresy and idolatry; but if we *lose* it, and let it drop, by ignorance and carelessness, and unacquaintedness with, and indifference to, the interests of Christianity.

We of this age cannot *otherwise* repay what we received from those who went before us, than by consigning the value received to those who come after us; nor make any other requital to our parents, for giving us a good education, but by giving the like to our children; which, therefore, with the utmost care and pains we should *qualify* ourselves to do, and then *make conscience* of doing. And those who have not children of their own, ought to do it for the children of their relations, and the children of the poor, and to promote public catechisings and charity schools; and thus contribute what they can to the raising up of a seed to serve Christ, which shall be accounted to him for a generation, that thus the name of Christ may endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. What has been told to us of the wondrous works of God, we must tell to our children, that they may tell them to their children, that those who *shall be created* may praise the Lord.[a]

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u 1 Tim. iv. 6. v Job xvii. 9. w Acts xviii. 24–26.

x Ps. i. 2. y Ps. cxix. 17. z 1 Cor. i. 5. a Ps. lxxviii. 5 6.

II. Those who have the *privilege* to hear and learn the forms of sound words, with it have a *charge*,—To hold them fast in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.

This implies that you are in danger of losing them, and being robbed of them, through your own negligence of having them snatched out of your hands by your spiritual enemies, or drop through your fingers if you do not hold them fast. Satan is that wicked one who steals the word of God out of the hearts of the careless hearers and learners; as the fowls of the air do the seed from the highway ground,[b] that it could not have any root in. Many have had the form of sound words, and with it a form of godliness, and a name to live; but have let them go, and lost them; have made shipwreck of the faith, and of their own souls. Let their falls be warnings to us, and let us therefore fear *lest we also come short*, or so much as *seem to come short*.

I know I speak to those who have the form of sound words, who have *hold of it*. In God's name therefore I charge you to *hold it fast*, to keep your hold of it, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.

1. You must hold it fast, that is, you must retain the remembrance of it; keep it in mind and memory; you have it, see that you always have it, that you have it ready for your use upon all occasions. Great stress is laid upon this: the gospel is that by which we are saved, if we keep in memory what has been preached unto us.[c] Not as if the bare remembering and being able to recite these sound words, and the forms of them, were sufficient to save us; they do not heal as charms and spells pretend to do, merely by the repeating or writing of them; a man may be able to say all the Bible over by heart, and yet come short of grace and glory; but the remembering of these things is necessary to our due improvement of them, and to the other duties required of us: if we so remember the covenant as to be ever mindful of it; if we remember his commandments to do them,[d] we remember them aright.

(1.) It will be of good use to you, to retain the words you now learn and hear; and in order to that, frequently to review them, to catechise yourselves, and repeat them over to yourselves. What you said to your parents perhaps by rote, when you were children, and not yet capable of knowing the intent and extent of, you should now say to yourselves, with understanding, and judgment, and affection. Let not the wisest and best be ashamed to repeat the words of their catechism, as they have occasion to quote them; but let them rather be ashamed who cannot do it; who can remember, all their days, the idle foolish stories and songs they learned when they were young, but forget the forms of those words whereby they must be saved, and must be judged.

(2.) It is of absolute necessity that you retain the remembrance of the *things*, so as to have them ready for use, though it be in your own words. It is necessary that you should be well acquainted with the mystery of the gospel; with your need of a Saviour; with the method in which the salvation was wrought out by the Son of God, and is applied by the Spirit of God; with the breadth of the commandment, and with the strictness and spiritual nature of it; with the tenor of the new covenant, and the precious privileges of it; and with the great truths concerning the upper and future world: in these things you have been instructed; and are concerned to give the more earnest heed to the things you have heard, lest at any time you let them slip.[e] Consider,

[1.] They are things worth remembering; of inestimable value in themselves, and of vast importance and concern to us; in comparison with which, abundance of other things which we fill our memories with, are but toys and trash. How many things do we retain the remembrance of, which tend to defile our minds, or to disquiet them, which we would *willingly forget* if we could; and how many more are we *industrious to keep in memory*, which serve only to the carrying on of our business in the world: whilst THAT is seldom or never seriously thought of, and so comes by degrees to be in a manner forgotten, WHICH BELONGS TO OUR PEACE, our everlasting peace; and justly may that be hid from our eyes,[f] which we thus hide our eyes from. The reason Moses gives to Israel, why they should set their hearts to all the words he testified to them, will hold more strongly, why we should treasure up Christ's word in our heart, and let it dwell in us richly, that *It is not a vain thing for us*, but *it is our life*,[g] and the lives of our souls depend upon it.

[2.] The remembrance of them will be of very great and good use to us daily; both to *fortify us against every evil word and work*, by suggesting to us the most powerful arguments against sin, and the most pertinent answers to the temptations of Satan; and to *furnish us for every good word and work*, by suggesting to us the wisest directions, and the sweetest encouragements, in doing our duty. If we hold fast these forms of sound words as we ought, our mouth, like that of the righteous, *shall speak wisdom*, and our tongue shall be able to *talk of judgment*. And if thus the law of our God be in our heart, none of our steps shall slide. Solomon for this reason writes to us excellent things in counsel and knowledge, *that we may answer the words of truth to those that send to us*;[h] or, as the margin reads it, *to those that send us*, to God, who sent us into the world to do all the good we can in it.

[3.] It was for this end that we have heard and learned them, *that we might lay them up in our hearts*,

[b] Matt. xiii. 19. [c] 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2. [d] 1 Chron. xvi. 15. [e] Heb. ii. 1. [f] Luke xix. 41. [g] Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. [h] Prov. xxii. 20, 21.

*in order to their being of use to us hereafter;* so that we receive the grace of God therein in vain, if we do not retain them. They are not intended merely for your present exercise and entertainment, as a task upon you to keep you employed, much less as an amusement to keep up in you a reverence for your parents and teachers; but they were intended to fit you for the service of God in this world, and the vision and fruition of him in a better world. You learn your catechism, not as you who were designed for tradesmen learned Latin and Greek, when you went to school, it may be, with design to forget it, because you had a notion you should never have occasion for it in your business; but as you learned to write and cast accounts, with design to retain it, because you were told you would have use for it daily in carrying on your trade. You are taught now, that you may, as long as you live, live according to what you are taught.

[4.] You will be called to an account shortly for these, as well as other your advantages; and therefore are concerned to improve them, so that you may give up your account with joy, such joy as shall be an earnest of that *joy of our Lord*, into which *good and faithful servants*, who have diligently and faithfully improved their talents, shall *enter*, and in which they shall be for ever happy. For your having heard and learned these things, will but aggravate your condemnation if you do not hold them fast. You know what was Chorazin's doom, and Bethsaida's, and Capernaum's; tremble lest it should be yours. It is an awful thought which I have somewhere met with, "That the professors of this age, in which there is such plenty of the means of knowledge and grace, whether they go to heaven, or hell, will be the greatest debtors in either of these places: if to heaven, the greatest debtors to divine mercy and grace for those improved means that helped to bring them thither; if to hell, the greatest debtors to divine justice for those abused means that would have helped to keep them thence."

Let not what I have said of the necessity of remembering the sound words we hear, be a discouragement to any serious, conscientious Christians, who have honest and good hearts, but weak and treacherous memories; nor make the righteous sad, who ought not to be made sad. You who tremble at God's word, do really get good by it, though you cannot recollect the method and language in which it is delivered you. If you live in the fear of God, and in a course of holy watchfulness against sin, and diligence in duty, you retain the impressions of the word, though you cannot retain the expressions of it. I have been told of a good man, who was much affected with a sermon he heard concerning, as it would appear, the vanity of the world; and commending it afterwards to a friend, was desired to give some account of the sermon: "Truly," says he, "I cannot remember any thing of it, but I am resolved, by the grace of God, I will never set my heart so much upon this world as I have done." "Why then," (says his friend) "thou rememberest all." David will never forget God's precepts, for (says he) *By them thou hast quickened me.*[i] If we find our hearts *quickened* by the word, we *do not* forget it; and it is to be hoped we *will not*, we *shall not*, forget it. Put a sieve that is dirty into the water, and though when you take it out it carries away little or nothing of the water with it, yet it is washed and made clean. Though we cannot repeat the good sermons we have heard; yet if, through grace, our hearts and ways are purified by them, they are not lost.

But let what I have said engage you who hear and learn the forms of sound words, to hold them fast, to imprint them in your minds and memories, that you may have them ready to you at all times, as occasion requires. In order to this, labour to understand them; and let your knowledge be clear and distinct, and then you will be likely to retain it; set every truth in its proper place, and then you will know where to find it; set it in its true light, and then you will know what use to make of it. Get your hearts duly affected with divine things, and abide and act under the power and influence of them; and then you will remember them. Be often repeating them to yourselves: the Virgin Mary kept the sayings of Christ, by *pondering them in her heart.*[k]

2. You must hold it fast in faith. It is not enough to *remember* the good truths that are taught you; but you must *mix them with faith*,[l] or they will not profit you. You let them go, though you remember them ever so well, if you let go the *belief* of them, and the *profession of your faith* concerning them: it is by a hand of faith that you *take hold* of them, and *keep hold.*

You must hold them fast in faith, that is,

(1.) You must give a firm assent to them as faithful sayings; must set to your seal that God is true. And every word of his is so, even that which you cannot *comprehend the mystery of*, as the eternity of God, the immensity of all his perfections, the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, the operations of the Spirit upon the soul of man, and the like; yet *because they are things which God has revealed*, you must subscribe to the truth of: if you do not, you make God a liar; and do in effect make yourselves wiser than God, when you say, *How can this be?* Whereas you should say, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.*

(2.) You must grow up to a full assurance of the

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i Ps. cxix. 93.

k Luke ii. 19.

l Heb. iv. 2.

undeniable truth, and incontestable evidence, of these sound words. Pass on toward perfection; acquaint yourselves with the *Confirming Catechism*; know not only *what* it is we believe, but *why* we believe it; and be ready always to give a reason of the hope that is in you.[m] Solomon had this view in instructing his son; *That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth*;[n] that thou mayst be convinced that they are words of truth, and receive them accordingly. And Luke the evangelist had the same design in writing his gospel, and inscribing it to his friend Theophilus, who, probably, had been his pupil; *That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed*;[o] this is holding it fast in faith.

(3.) You must make a faithful application of these sound and healing words to yourselves; else they will not answer the end, or be healing to you, any more than food not eaten, physic not taken, or a plaster not applied. Of the word of Christ you must say, not only, "This is true," but, "This is true concerning *me*:" *He loved me, and gave himself for me*; to save me, not *in* my sins, but *from* them; and to purify me to himself, and make me zealous of good works. Hear it, and know it, for thy good,[p] says Eliphaz to Job, *for thyself*, so it is in the margin. Then only we know it for our good, when we know it for *ourselves*.

3. You must hold it fast in love; that is the other arm with which these forms of sound words must be embraced, and held, that we may not let them go.

(1.) You must take delight in them, and in the knowledge of them: that which we love we will hold fast, and not easily part with. It is not enough for us to know the truth, but we must love it; not enough that we receive it as a faithful saying, but also as well worthy of all acceptation; we must not only give it credit as true news, but bid it welcome as good news, and rejoice in it; and when Christ says, *Surely, I come quickly*, we must not only say, "*Even so*, SO IT IS, *he* WILL *come*," but *Amen*, *so* BE IT; COME, *Lord Jesus*.[q] This wisdom, this knowledge, must so enter into thy heart, as to become pleasant to thy soul.[r] They say it was a ceremony used of old by the Jews, when they sent their children to school, they gave them a piece of a honeycomb to eat, repeating those words of Solomon, *My son, eat thou honey because it is good, and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste; so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul, when thou hast found it*.[s] And that which is not thus delighted in, will not be long held fast.

(2.) You must be affected with them, and lay them to heart, as things that concern you to the last degree. Love is the leading affection, and rules the rest; as that goes, all the rest move. Be affected with love to the good word of God; and then you will conceive a high value and veneration for Christ, and a rooted antipathy to sin; a holy contempt of the world, a deep concern for your own souls, and a care about your everlasting state; and all other good affections, that will be the principles of a steady and regular motion of the soul heaven-wards. And then you will hold fast this form of sound words, when it makes such impressions as those upon you, and (as Christ's sayings ought to do) sinks down into your hearts,[t] and impresses a weight and stamp upon them.

3. You must be influenced by them, and act under the commanding power of them. That *love* in which the sound words must be held fast, is here put for all that *evangelical obedience* which holy love is the principle of; for, as faith works by love, so love works by keeping the commandments of God;[u] for *This is the love of God*, that we *keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous*. We then hold fast the sayings of Christ, when we hold to them, in the constant temper of our minds, and tenor of our lives, and govern ourselves by them in all we say or do, that we may *thus* adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.

4. There is one word more in the text to be touched upon, and it is the centre and crown of all: This faith and love must be in Christ Jesus. Blessed Paul, full of blessed Jesus, breathes nothing so much as Christ; he is his Alpha and Omega, and must be ours; it is the token in every epistle. We must hold fast the sound words of the gospel, in that faith and love which has Christ for its author, its object, and its end.

(1.) Which has Christ for its *author*; that faith and love which is wrought in us, not by the strength of any natural reasonings or resolutions of our own, but by the Spirit and grace of Christ, darting rays of divine light into the understanding, and striking sparks of divine fire into the affections, for these are *not of ourselves*, they are the *gift of God*. Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus;[v] for on him is our help laid, and in him only is our help found. Depend not upon any ability of your own, lean not to your own understanding, but go forth and go on, take hold and keep hold, in Christ's strength.

(2.) Which has Christ for its *object*; that faith and love in which the truths of the gospel must be held fast, as it must flow from Christ, so it must fasten on him. It is Christ in the gospel that we must embrace, and hold fast; who is the true treasure hid in that field, which we must think it worth while to part with all we have for the purchase of. It is by faith in Christ, and love to Christ, that we must hold fast what we have received. For this

m 1 Pet. iii. 15. n Prov. xxii. 21. o Luke i. 4.
p Job v. 27. q Rev. xxii. 20.
r Prov. ii. 10. s Prov. xxiv. 13, 14. t Luke ix. 44.
u 1 John v. 3. v 2 Tim. ii. 1.

reason we must embrace these sound words, because we find so much of Christ in them. He is that golden thread that runs through the web of the whole gospel. St. Austin somewhere says of himself, that before his conversion he took great delight in reading the writings of Tully, the Roman orator, but now (says he) I cannot relish them at all, as I used to do, because I find nothing of Christ in them.

(3.) Which has Christ for its *end*. It must be that faith and love *which has an eye to Christ*; which has this always in view, *to glorify Christ, and to be glorified with Christ*: that *faith* which presses toward its own perfection, in the immediate sight of Christ; and that *love* which presses toward its own perfection, in the everlasting enjoyment of him.

### Application.

Let me now close with a few words of exhortation, in reference to the form of sound words.

1. Let us bless God, that our lot is cast in a land of light; that he who determines the times before appointed, and the bounds of men's habitations, has determined ours so well, and so much to our advantage; that those statutes and judgments, which the heathen have not known, are revealed to us. We can never be enough thankful to God for this distinguishing favour, his manifesting himself to us, so as not unto the world. *Blessed are our eyes, for they see* the joyful light, and *our ears, for they hear* the joyful sound, which many prophets and kings desired to see, desired to hear, and might not.[w] We can never be enough thankful to God for it, that living in a *Christian nation* we have Bibles; in a *protestant nation*, we have them in a language we understand; that to us are committed the oracles of God,[x] *the lively oracles*, with more advantage than to the Jews of old; that with us are the priests, the Lord's ministers, sounding with his trumpets.[y] So many and so great are our privileges, above most other nations, that it may justly be expected, I wish it could be as justly said, *Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*[z]

2. Let us particularly be thankful to God, for the forms of sound words, both ancient and modern, which we have among us; for our catechisms and confessions of faith; that we have plenty of them, and variety of them, not clashing and contradicting each other, but rather confirming and illustrating each other; for to Christ they all with one consent bear witness, and to the law and to the testimony they all appeal: though the methods be different, they meet in the same centre; and tend to direct those of different tastes and capacities to it likewise.

3. Let parents and governors of families make conscience of instructing their children, and servants, in the forms of sound words. Here this work must begin, for it must begin betimes; *Whom shall he teach knowledge? Whom shall he make to understand doctrine?* The prophet there answers, *Them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts:*[a] when they are very young, under the immediate care of their mothers or grandmothers, as Timothy was: they are the teachers of babes.[b] When Solomon was tender, and only-beloved in the sight of his mother,[c] she taught him.[d] The history of the Scripture is most proper to acquaint your children with in the first place; we see how soon they apprehend, and are affected, with other stories, and why may not impressions be made upon them as soon by the Scripture stories. Pleasant and profitable instructions may also be given to children by the psalms for singing, and by divine poems and verses suited to their capacity.

It will be of great use likewise to your children, to be told betimes, what it is supposed natural for them to ask, *What we mean by this and the other religious service.*[e] Tell them why you read the Bible with so much veneration: because it is the book of God, and holy men wrote the several parts of it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Tell them why you make conscience of praying to God so solemnly every day: because you have a necessary and constant dependence upon God, and upon his providence and grace, that you are daily receiving mercy from him, and daily need his favour. Tell them why you observe the Lord's day, and make such a difference between that and other days; that it is in remembrance of the creation of the world, the resurrection of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit. Especially tell them of their baptism; take all opportunities to let them see children baptized, (in order to which it is very good to have it done publicly,) and tell them, thus they were baptized in their infancy, and by that solemnity *dedicated and devoted to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; and what was done for them then, they must now do for themselves. Tell them of the corruption of their nature, which needed cleansing; and of the grace of God in Christ, in which there is a cleansing virtue.

Set them to learn their catechism; let them commit some portions of Scripture to memory, as you find they are able to do it; and examine them, what they can remember of the sermons they hear. You will meet with some difficulty herein from the corruption of their nature, which you must endeavour to get over as much as may be by a gentle hand; give them instruction with all possible freedom and familiarity, with compassion and condescension to their capacity. *Those* teach these things most dili-

w Matt. xiii. 16, 17. x Rom. iii. 2. y 2 Chron. xiii. 12. z Deut. iv. 6. a Isa. xxviii. 9.

b Rom. ii. 20. c Prov. iv. 3. d Prov. xxxi. 1. e Exod. xii. 25.

gently to their children, not who are the most dictatorial in doing it, and make the greatest noise, but who talk of them *frequently*; when they sit in the house, and walk by the way, when they lie down, and when they rise up,[f] frequently dropping good instructions among their children: and if but one in ten insensibly slip into their minds, and fasten there, what good proficients may we hope they will be in time. Contrive how to make this work, as much as may be, a pleasure and delight to your children and servants, and not a task, or a terror, or a drudgery. Teach them as Christ teaches, who is meek and lowly in heart.

4. Let the ministers of Christ look upon themselves as under a charge to feed the lambs of Christ's flock. All the reformed churches make this a part of their work; to be done either publicly or privately; either in their solemn religious assemblies, or in meetings on purpose for this work; or in visiting their families, either by themselves, or, as in some churches abroad, by some other proper persons qualified for, and deputed to, this service particularly. Private catechising has the advantage of a more particular application to the persons catechised: public catechising has the advantage of a more general edification; and therefore both should be used in their season, or that which, all circumstances considered, may turn to the best account.

O that we who are ministers, were filled with a zeal for the spiritual welfare and eternal salvation of young people, and a concern for the rising generation; and were to do our utmost as our ability and opportunity is, to fill the minds of young ones, in their early days, with the knowledge of Christ, and to fix them for Christ, that the next generation may be better than this. And O that those who are employed in public catechising, may see of the travail of their souls to their satisfaction, and not labour in vain!

5. Let us look with pity upon the great numbers of children, even in our own land, who are not taught these forms of sound words, but are bred up in ignorance and profaneness; strangers and enemies to Christ and true Christianity. *They are poor, they are foolish, they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.*[g] They sit in darkness in a land of light, and walk on in darkness, and if infinite mercy do not interpose to prevent, they are hastening into utter darkness. If you can do any thing, sirs, have compassion upon them and help them; pick up some of those neglected, abandoned young ones, you who have ability, and rescue them from ruin, by putting them into a way of receiving instruction. We have charity schools set up in the city and country; which, if managed by the rules of catholic Christianity, have a direct tendency to the bettering of the world, and the reforming of the next age, if the reforming of this should be despaired of. What is given to the support and encouragement of them, is charity, both to soul and body, and will be fruit abounding to your account.

6. Let those who have heard and learned the forms of sound words long ago, retain them still, and improve more and more. I have reason to think I speak to many who were blessed with a good education, were trained up in the way wherein they should go: I beseech you examine yourselves, not only whether you have not departed from it, I hope you have not quite deserted it, but what progress have you made in it? What have you built upon that foundation? Has it been wood, hay, and stubble;[h] airy notions, nice speculations, perverse disputings, and strifes of words? or has it been gold, silver, and precious stones; advances in serious godliness, in holiness, and heavenly mindedness, and the power of that kingdom of God, which is not meat or drink, but *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*?[i] Go on and prosper, for the Lord is with you. But if you have in any degree let go that good thing which was committed to your trust, I beseech you bethink yourselves whence you have fallen, and remember again what you have received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.*[k]

7. I must not part without a word to you, whose request brought me to this service here to-day, you who are catechised in the principles of religion, that you may grow yet more and more in the knowledge of Christ and Christianity.

(1.) Carefully attend to the instructions that are given you; and treasure them up, with sincerity, and all the marks of reverence and seriousness. Give attendance on, and attention to, what is taught you, and set your heart to it. You must take pains, else you cannot expect to reap advantage; for it is in labour that there is profit. Be careful to mark what is said, not critical to make remarks upon it; and give account of it with affection, but without affectation; and attend here not for ostentation, because you think yourselves better than others, but for your edification, because you would be better than you are.

(2.) Pray over what is taught you, and beg of God to bless it to you. Man can but teach the outward ear, it is God only that can bring it to the heart, and in that respect none teach like him. It is he who teaches with a strong hand,[l] and then the teaching is effectual; who seals the instruction,[m] and then it is abiding; who gives the understanding, and opens the heart. Look up to him therefore by faithful and fervent prayer, for that grace of his which is necessary to your profiting by the means of grace. You

[f] Deut. vi. 7. [g] Jer. v. 4. [h] 1 Cor. iii. 12. [i] Rom. xiv. 17. [k] Rev. iii. 2, 3. [l] Isa. viii. 11. [m] Job xxxiii. 16.

crave his blessing upon the food for your body, that it may be nourishing to you; and can you expect your spiritual food should nourish you without that blessing, or that you should have that blessing, if you do not pray for it? That good thing which is by the word committed to you to keep for God, do you by prayer commit to God to keep for you, and bring it to your minds when you should use it.

(3.) Live as those who by attendance on such an exercise as this, make a profession of religion above many others. Hereby you seem to be more solicitous about your souls, and more inquisitive concerning the way to heaven, than your neighbours; but what will it avail you that you seem to be so, unless you be really so? The tree will be known by its fruits. Evidence that you receive not so much instruction in vain, by the exemplary purity and piety, seriousness and strictness, of your whole conversation. By your justice and charity, and unshaken veracity and fidelity; your sobriety and temperance; your humility and meekness; your conscientious obedience to your parents and masters, and a steady course of godliness and honesty; you ought to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. I remember Epictetus—pressing his pupil to show by his practice of virtue, his profiting by the instructions given him—illustrates it by this similitude: "The sheep," says he, "do not come to their shepherd, and show him how much meat they have eaten, but they make it to appear by their growing fatter and fitter for use." *Thus*, therefore, do you make it appear, that you improve in Christian knowledge, *by the agreeableness and evenness of your Christian practice, and your perseverance in it to the end*, that you and we may rejoice, in the day of the Lord, that we have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain.

# A MEMORIAL OF THE FIRE OF THE LORD:

IN

# A SERMON,

PREACHED SEPTEMBER 2ND, 1713, BEING THE DAY OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE BURNING OF LONDON, IN 1666.

AT MR. REYNOLDS'S MEETING-HOUSE, NEAR THE MONUMENT.

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NUMBERS xi. 3.

*And he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burnt among them.*

WE have here an account of the prudent and pious care which Moses took, to preserve the memorial of a fire which happened in the camp of Israel, by giving a new name of suitable signification to the place where it happened; which being left upon record here, in the book of God, is a monument of the fire, further visible and more durable than this pillar of stone, the monument hard by, and will outlast even the pillar of salt; for wherever, in any age, the books of Moses are read, and they shall be read in every age to the end of time, there shall this be told for a memorial; that the fire of the Lord burnt among the Israelites, and in remembrance of it, Moses called the place *Taberah*.

And thus it suits the occasion of our meeting here to-day, in communion with many religious assemblies in this city, to put ourselves and one another in mind of that *fire of the Lord*, which, in the memory of many of you, burnt among you to that degree, as to make of this city a heap, this flourishing city a ruin; a judgment which it was then thought fit, by the annual observation of this day, to transmit the remembrance of to posterity.

Now observe in the text,

1. What the judgment of God upon the camp of Israel was. *The fire of the Lord burnt among them.* It is called *the fire of the Lord*, because it fell from heaven, it came immediately from the hand of God: as that fire did, which sometimes consumed the sacrifices, in token of God's acceptance of them, when justly it might have consumed the sinners, and taken vengeance on them. Here it did consume the sinners, to signify, that their iniquity was such, as should not be purged with sacrifice or offering for ever;[a] as another time it consumed the sacrificers, when they offered strange fires.[b]

Lightning is the *fire of the Lord*, as thunder is the *voice of the Lord*. With that fire Job's sheep, and the servants that attended them, were burnt up.[c] It is heaven's fire-arms, with which sometimes dreadful execution has been done. "Fire and water," we say, "are good servants, but bad masters:" the old world was mastered and destroyed by water, and this is reserved unto fire.[d] God has treasures of both in his magazines, which he has laid up against the *time of trouble, the day of battle and war*.[e]

This fire of the Lord burnt among them, among that people whom God peculiarly favoured, when by sin they displeased him, and his anger was kindled against them.[f] Though the pillar of cloud and fire was over them to protect them, while they kept themselves in the love of God, that should be no security to them, when they rebelled against him. It burnt the bodies of many of them to death, they were killed with lightning; or, perhaps, it burnt their tents and goods; *It consumed*, (so the original is, *v.* 1.) *in the uttermost parts of the camp*, not saying whether persons or dwellings. Our translation determines it to persons, *them that dwell there;* but the *quenching of the fire*, (*v.* 2.) seems rather to intimate that it was the *tents* that were burnt. It kindled in the *utmost parts of the camp*, where the inferior sort were, the mixt multitude, who were

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a 1 Sam. iii. 14. b Lev. x. 1, 2. c Job i. 16.

d 2 Pet. iii. 6, 7. e Job xxxviii. 23. f Numb. xi. 1.

generally the ringleaders in every mutiny; the judgment began where the sin began. Or, it intimates that God came upon them by degrees, seizing those first who were of lower rank, that others might take warning. Or, this fire began in the utmost parts of the camp, as if it would take all before it.

Now this, among other things, happened to them for example,[g] and was intended to be a warning to us, that we sin not after the similitude of their transgression. The people complained; that was it that provoked God to kindle this fire among them. Let those who are of a fretful, discontented spirit, who are always complaining of their lot, complaining of every event, quarrelling with God and his providence, diminishing every mercy, and doubling every cross, see in this instance, what an exceeding sinful sin this is, and how provoking to God. Those who are always complaining for trifles, must expect to have something given them to complain of. As on the one hand nothing is more acceptable to God, than our humble acceptance of all he says and does. *(Quis Deo placuit? Cui Deus placuerit—Who pleases God? The man whom God pleases,* Aug.) so on the other hand, nothing is more displeasing to God, than our being displeased at his disposals.

2. The memorial of this judgment, to transmit a traditional knowledge of it to posterity, Moses called that place, *Taberah, Incendium, Combustio—a Burning.* The Seventy translate the Hebrew name Εμπυρισμος. Moses knew too well how apt the people were, soon to forget the works of God, both his mercies and his judgments, and therefore was very industrious to fix in their minds the remembrance of them; and contrived means to revive the remembrance of them, when it should begin to dwindle and die. This fire of the Lord, though it burned but in the uttermost part of the camp, and was soon quenched, yet must not be forgotten; he therefore calls the place *Taberah*—Here the burning was. And if posterity ask, What burning? It will be answered, the burning of a part of the camp of the Israelites, with the fire of the Lord, for their discontent and murmuring. And we find Moses himself, near forty years after, putting the next generation in mind of this very thing, purely by the mention of this name, as he did of other the like sins and judgments, by the names he had given to other places for the same purpose: *And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-Hattaavah, ye provoked the Lord to wrath.*[h]

But by recording those things in his sacred writings, he has more effectually preserved the memorial of them, and transmitted it even to us, whose lot is cast in the ends of the earth, and upon whom the ends of the world are come.[i] And this is one of those passages of story, which the Psalmist would have the fathers to make known to their children, that they may tell them to theirs; That God heard their murmurings and was wroth, *so a fire was kindled against Jacob.*[k]

So that hence we may gather this lesson:

*That a lasting memorial ought to be kept of the fire of the Lord, when it has at any time burned among a people.*

As the mercies of God ought to have their memorials, and used to have in the church of God *names* of remembrance, *stones* of remembrance, *songs* of remembrance, *days* of remembrance, of which it were easy to give numerous instances in Scripture; so the judgments of God too should be remembered, for they are improvable as well as his mercies, improvable not only by the sufferers themselves, and by their neighbours at the same time, but by their successors afterwards, as Shiloh's ruins were Jerusalem's instructions,[l] many ages afterwards. Care must therefore be taken, not only to preserve the remembrance of them in our own bosoms, but to transmit it to the generations to come, for their benefit.

For it is not enough to remember these works of God, but we must consider them,[m] must wisely consider[n] them, so as to understand them, and make a good use of our remembrance of them. As we must remember God's commandments to do them,[o] else we remember them to no purpose; so we must remember God's providences, not merely as matter of discourse among ourselves, or information to our children, but with suitable affections working in our spirits, and suitable impressions made upon them. *Lo, this, we have searched it,* (says Eliphas,) *so it is, hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*[p]

(1.) We must often call to mind the personal and private rebukes of Providence, which we ourselves and our families have been under. The history of a man's own life is as useful a piece of history as any he can study; and here a man must be his own historian, and his own reader; and therefore under both characters it is to be hoped he will be careful, and faithful *to* himself. God's counsel to Israel is good counsel to every Israelite, *Thou shalt remember all the way in which the Lord thy God has led thee in this wilderness,* how *he humbled thee,* and *suffered thee to hunger,* and *chastened thee, as a man chasteneth his son.*[q]

We should remember what God has spoken to us, not only by his word, giving earnest heed, lest at any time we let it slip,[r] but by his rod, for that also has a voice, an articulate, intelligible voice, and is sent to us on an errand, and waits for an answer; and the voice of both we should now both hear for the time to come, and hear from the time past; and the repeating of the lessons we have been taught by

g 1 Cor. x. 6. h Deut. ix. 22. i 1 Cor. x. 11.
k Ps. lxxviii. 6, 21. l Jer. vii. 12. m Eccl. vii. 13.
n Ps. lxiv. 9. o Ps. ciii. 18. p Job v. 6.
q Deut. viii. 2, 3, 5. r Heb. ii. 1.

both, is confessedly necessary to our learning of them perfectly.

Apt enough we are to complain of our former afflictions, too apt to remember them, with peevish reflections upon the divine Providence, and the instruments of it, and vain boasting of what hardships we have gone through. But we should remember them, to renew our repentance for the sins that procured them, our thankfulness for the mercy that supported us under them, our patient submissions to the will of God in them, our improvements in knowledge and grace by them, and the good resolutions of better obedience we made under them; it is for this end that we are to preserve memorials of our troubles: as the lamenting church remembered the affliction and the misery, the wormwood and the gall, *My soul* (says she) *hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me.*[s] And as David penned many of his psalms, to keep in remembrance, and to bring to remembrance, the distresses he was in, that at the same time he might recollect, for his present benefit, the frame of his spirit, and the workings of his heart under them.

You have all found your days upon earth to be full of trouble, though not all alike so; review the troubles of your life, that what was ill done by you in the day of your affliction, may be undone by repentance; and what was well done, may be done again, may be better done, and kept always in the imagination of the thought of your heart. Let not your sicknesses and pains be forgotten; Hezekiah took care that his should not, but should be kept in remembrance by his writing, when he had been sick and was recovered.[t] Let not your losses in your estate, your crosses and disappointments in your affairs, be forgotten. Let not the death of your dear relations, and the breaches thereby made upon your comforts, be forgotten. Naomi took care that her complicated griefs of both those kinds should not be, when she changed her own name, *Call me not Naomi, call me Mara.*[u] David took care that his should not, when he penned the 39th Psalm (it should seem) upon occasion of the death of some friend who was dear to him, and left upon record his prayer under the affliction, *Lord, make me to know my end*, and his promise, *I will take heed to my ways.*[v]

By remembering your afflictions in this good manner, and for these good purposes, you may not only regain the benefit you formerly got by them, but may gain more; as having now your thoughts more cool and sedate, and under command, than they were in the hurry of the affliction. The chastening for the present is grievous, and perhaps we are under it, as Job was, *full of confusion*; but it is afterwards, when it comes to be reflected upon and reviewed, that it yields the *peaceable fruit of righteousness*,[w] fruit that remains.

By a due remembrance of former convictions, if we received them aright, like the tender and tractable child, we shall be kept from returning to folly, and so prevent another correction; and, like the burnt child, dread the fire.

(2.) We must often call to mind public judgments, judgments upon the communities we are members of; upon the land and nation, God's controversies with them; upon the city, his voice that has cried to it; for as in the peace thereof we have peace, so in the trouble thereof we have trouble, and must feel it. Those are unworthy the honour of Zion's sons, who think not themselves concerned in Zion's sorrows, her past as well as present sorrows.

Though God by subsequent providences in favour of a returning people, may have superseded *the fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, the fast of the tenth*, so as to *turn them into joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts*;[x] and by the abundance of our comforts, may make us to *forget our miseries*, and *to remember them as waters that pass away*;[y] *to forget all our toil*,[z] as Joseph did; yet we must still remember to make a pious improvement of it; must still be sowing, sowing in the spirit, though the tears in which we sowed be in some measure wiped away: and to assist you herein, as God enables me, is my desire and endeavour at this time, that our coming together may not be in vain.

God has many ways contended with us of this nation, with you of this city; as we have been, like Israel of old, favoured with many privileges and advantages above our neighbours, both for life and godliness, whence it might justly, and with good reason, have been inferred, as it was concerning them, *Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people*;[a] so, being found like them, notwithstanding this, *a foolish people and unwise*, nay, a *rebellious* and *gainsaying people*, we have like them fallen under severe judgments: for the more rich a people's privileges are, the more provoking their sins are, and consequently the heavier are their punishments; for even in this life, especially in dealing with communities, (which as such can be dealt with in this life only,) God sometimes observes a proportion between the sins and the plagues.

Some have observed, that God's judgments upon us in this last age, have been the sorest in their kind of any other; like that concerning which the prophet appeals to the old men, and to all the inhabitants of the land, whether there had ever been the like in their days, or in the days of their fathers.[b] Never was there such a plague in this nation, as that

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s Lam. iii. 19, 20. t Isa. xxxviii. 9. u Ruth i. 20.
v Ps. xxxix. 4. w Heb. xii. 11.
x Zech. viii. 19. y Job xi. 16. z Gen. xli. 51.
a Deut. iv. 6. b Joel i. 2.

in London in 1665. never such a fire as that the year after, never such a dreadful storm as that about ten years ago, as if God were heating the furnace *seven times hotter*; for he will bring greater judgments on those who are not wrought upon by lesser; and when he judgeth he will overcome.

That which I am now to confine myself to, is the fire of the Lord which was kindled in this city, this day 47 years, which in four days' time laid in ashes the richest, the oldest, and the most considerable part of this city, I mean within the walls; and I observe upon the calculation then made, that there was almost as much consumed without the walls, as was left standing within. For thus the survey stood; "373 acres burnt within the walls, and 75 left standing; but there were 63 acres burnt without the walls." You had 89 parish churches burnt, besides chapels; you had your Exchange, your Guildhall, and the halls of your companies, laid in ashes; and above thirteen thousand dwellings levelled with the ground.

Some of you can remember it, perhaps by a good token, a sad token, you were burnt out of your houses it may be, and forced to lodge in the fields. It may be some of you were great losers by it, when you were young, and setting out in the world, and it was a great while before you recovered it; it broke the measures you had laid, ruffled your affairs, and put you upon new counsels; or perhaps brought you so much to a loss, that you were at your wits' ends, and at that time knew not what to do; but have since found to your comfort, that God knew what to do for you, and has graciously helped you.

Or though you were not then so far grown up, or so far engaged in the world, as to be sufferers by it, yet you were eye-witnesses of it. You saw it rage, you saw what desolations it made; and now you are old, will say it was the most dreadful sight you ever saw. The piteous case of so many ruined families, and their doleful lamentations, could not but be yet more affecting, yet more afflicting; and made you ready to cry with the prophet in a like case, *my bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart, because thou hast heard, O my soul*, the alarm of fire! Fire! no less terrible than the alarm of war; *Destruction upon destruction is cried.*[c] The destruction of the fire, upon that of the pestilence the year before. Many a melancholy story perhaps some of you have told, upon the occurrences of that time, and the impressions they made upon you.—*Quæque ipse miserrima vidi—Disastrous things have I seen.*

But there is another thing which you must give me leave to inquire, What you remember of it? The faithful ministers of Christ at that time, no doubt, laid out themselves in their preaching, to improve that providence, in dealing with you about your souls. Something came from the press upon that occasion, by Mr. Vincent, Mr. Doolittle, and others; and much more we may well conclude by word of mouth. Now what do you remember of that? What account can you give of the sermons you heard upon that occasion, and of the good impressions they made upon you when you were young, and your hearts tender? Can you say, through grace, that your consciences were then convinced and awakened, and that when you were chastened, you were taught out of the law, and the gospel.[d] Happy the day, and happy you, if what you then lost by the rod of God, was made up, and more than made up to you, in what you gained by the word of God.

But the most of you were not then born, or were so young as to remember nothing of it; yet you have been told of it, perhaps you have read of it, and cannot be altogether ignorant of that event. Blessed be God, there is no occasion for such different sentiments and resentments between the old people and the young, as there were when the foundations of the second temple were laid, when the young people rejoiced to see a temple begun, but the aged wept, because it was so far inferior to the old one. No, if the young will join with you who are old, in bewailing the fall of the former city, you will join with them in celebrating the beauty of the latter;[e] and let both join in endeavouring to improve the remembrance of that fire of the Lord.

Nine lessons I shall recommend to you, to be learned from that fire which we are this day observing the memorial of.

I. See how terrible God is in his judgments, and fear before him. It was the fire of the Lord that burnt among you; whatever hand of man might be in it, it is certain this evil in the city was the Lord's doing; it was a consumption determined by the Lord of hosts,[f] and the breath of the Almighty that kindled the fire, and directed all the motions of it. It was the Light of Israel, who is and will be a rejoicing Light to his people, that was then as a fire, a *consuming fire*;[g] for so our God is and will be, to those who rebel against him; and the Holy One of Israel, who was then as a flame, that devoured so many churches and houses, as if they had been briers and thorns, in one day.

See how terrible God's majesty is; when he came down upon an errand of mercy, to deliver Israel out of Egypt, he appeared in a flame of fire in the bush;[h] and at Mount Sinai, the sight of the glory of the God of Israel, was like devouring fire in the eyes of the children of Israel:[i] but much more terrible is his justice to them that provoke him. If the glory of his greatness be like fire, to a people who are entering into covenant with him, much more will the

c Jer. iv. 19, 20. d Ps. xciv. 12. e Ezra iii. 11. f Isa. xxviii. 22. g Isa. x. 16, 17. h Exod. iii. 2. i Exod. xxiv. 17.

terror of his wrath be so, to a people who have broken covenant with him.

Come, behold what desolations God has made, and say with Moses the man of God, upon the review of the judgments of God inflicted on Israel in the wilderness, and this at *Taberah*, among the rest, *Who knows the power of thine anger?*[k] Say as the men of Bethshemesh said, when there was such a slaughter made among them who looked into the ark, *Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?*[l] Say as the sinners in Sion are forced at length to say, and the hypocrites when fearfulness surpriseth them, *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring flames,*[m] (by which some understand God himself,) *with the everlasting burning?* Say as David, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments:*[n] and conclude with the apostle, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*[o]

God has all creatures at his command, and all the powers they have are derived from him, and by them he designs to keep the world in awe. The power which the fire has to consume and destroy is from him; when he pleases he can countermand it, as in the case of the three children; and when he pleases he can commission it, and enforce its operations, and direct its motions. *The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire,*[p] sends one flame one way, and another flame another way, and each on its respective errand.

Let the thoughts of the fire of London fill us with a holy awe of God, and a filial fear of his wrath; that fire of the Lord, which when it is kindled but a little, much more when it is kindled to such a degree, we shall see cause to say, *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*[q] *Fear ye not* me, *saith the Lord,*[r] that with a touch, with a frown, with a look, can make the *mountains smoke?* that with one spark of fire can lay *heaps upon heaps?* Let the earth tremble at his presence, much more at his absence, and his departure in anger.

See what fools they are, who make this God their enemy by sin, and engage his power against them, and yet when they have done so, bid defiance to his justice, challenge him to do his worst, saying, *Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it.*[s] Is this a God to be jested with? *Be not deceived, he is not mocked.* Presumptuous sinners, who play with this fire, who *stretch out their hands against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty, who run upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler,*[t] will find to their cost, that none ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. God has access with his flames to men's hearts, as well as to their houses, can kindle a fire in their bones, a fire in their consciences, that shall secretly waste and exhaust their spirits, a fire not blown, not seen, that shall consume them, a fire that shall burn to the lowest hell, and never be quenched.

Give all diligence, therefore, to make your peace with this terrible God: it may be done, it shall be done, if it be not your own fault. *Fury is not in him,* and yet it is to no purpose to think of contending with him; to make opposition, is but like putting briers and thorns before a consuming fire, which, instead of stopping its progress, does but make it burn the more furiously. Let him therefore take hold on his strength, that he may make peace, *and he shall make peace.*[u]

And having made your peace with God, keep yourselves always in his love, and take heed of turning yourselves out of it; and while you do so, solace yourselves in his love, and believe that this God of power will be your protector, and a wall of fire round about you.

II. See what a mischievous thing sin is, which provokes God thus to be our enemy, and to fight against us. If it was God's justice that burnt London, it was man's injustice that brought fuel to the fire; for a fruitful land is never turned into barrenness, nor a flourishing city into ruins, but it is for the iniquity of them that dwell therein.[v] God never contends with a people, but it is sin, it is sin that is the cause of the controversy. National sins bring national judgments. The sins of a city bring misery upon it; *Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed.*[w] When the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly, it was not long ere he rained hell from heaven upon them; and when all flesh had corrupted their way, presently they were cut down out of time, and their foundation overthrown with a flood. It was the wickedness of the city, that made it combustible matter for the fire of God's wrath to fasten upon, *Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra—Sin reigned within and without the walls.* When sin abounds both within the walls and without, no wonder if the fire prevails in both.

London was then told by the watchmen upon her walls, what the sins were that provoked God to lay it waste; they had then a loud call to show this Jerusalem her abominations, which might be read in her desolations. It was then justly observed, that for some time before the fire, the power of vice and profaneness was grown more exorbitant than ever, more daring, more threatening, that it insulted and triumphed over the restraints and checks which for some years before it had lain under, and now set them at defiance. It was observed, remember, not long since, by a venerable body, "That at that time, to avoid hypocrisy, men ran into open impiety:" and I have heard it complained of, by those who lived at

k Psal. xc. 11. l 1 Sam. vi. 20. m Isa. xxxiii. 14.
n Psal. cxix. 120. o Heb. x. 31. p Psal. xxix. 7. q Psal. ii. 12.
r Jer. v. 22. s Isa. v. 19. t Job xv. 25, 26.
u Isa. xxvii. 4, 5. v Psal. cvii. 34. w Lam. i. 8.

that time, "that debauchery was made by many a test of loyalty; and a man was suspected to be disaffected to his prince, if he did not profane the name of his God." Was this the character of the times immediately preceding that desolation? And could any other be expected, but that God should visit for these things, and that his soul should be avenged on such a city, such *a nation, as this?*[x]

Sabbath-breaking is a sin for which God has particularly threatened to contend by fire: *If ye will not hearken to me, to hallow the sabbath day, I will kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem.*[y] How sabbaths had been profaned in those times of licentiousness, is easy to conjecture; and if we may make remarks upon the circumstances of a judgment, in order to the improving of it, it must be taken notice of, that the fire began between one and two of the clock on a Lord's-day morning, as if God would thereby intimate, that it was kindled to avenge the quarrel of his sabbath.

How should this increase our hatred of sin, that evil and bitter thing, by which we have procured such things as these to ourselves, which has been the destruction of souls, bodies, families, cities, churches, nations, worlds; which is not only the reproach, but the ruin, of any people. What a dread should we conceive of the fatal consequences of national sins, which would fix us among those holy mourners, who sigh and cry for the abominations that are committed amongst us.[z] Methinks this should put life into the despised and almost deserted cause, of the reformation of manners among us, that in the prosecution of it, we not only consult the glory of God, the honour of our holy religion, and the good of precious souls, but the peace, safety, and prosperity of the communities we are members of. The surest way to prevent another fire, is, to discountenance and suppress that immorality and profaneness, for which the fire of the Lord has burnt among you.

Not that this was the only ground of God's controversy with the city. Even the professors of religion, who run not with others to an excess of riot, contributed to the guilt which kindled those flames, by their lukewarmness and indifference in religion, their pride, and vanity, and worldliness, and neglect of family worship, as they were often then told by their faithful reprovers. Under such public calamities, our business is not to judge and censure others, but each of us to take blame and shame to ourselves, and seriously to ask, *What have I done?*

And yet we must be very regardless of the work of the Lord, and the operation of his hand, if we do not observe, that London's plague and fire came but three or four years after the casting out and silencing of a great number of able, faithful ministers of Christ there, and all the nation over, because they would not sin against their consciences. Jerusalem was burnt the first time, for misusing the messengers of the Lord;[a] and the second time, for laying hands on the disciples of Christ, and persecuting them;[b] for Christ resented what was done against them, as done against himself.

At least we must be allowed to observe, that the fire happened not six months after the commencing of the *Five-mile Act*, by which they who, but a little before, were turned out of their churches, were barbarously turned out of their houses, and not suffered to live within five miles of any corporation, or of the places where they had been ministers. It was the observation of a wise and good man at that time, "that as it was in mercy to many of the ministers, that they were removed out of the city, before that desolating judgment came; so it spoke aloud to the government, *Let my people go, that they may serve me; and if ye will not, behold, thus and thus will I do unto you.*" This he thought was the Lord's voice, then crying in the city.

III. See what an uncertain thing this world is, and all our possessions and employments in it. If men would but believe the preacher's text and doctrine, which is delivered to us, not only as the word of the Eternal God, which therefore we may venture to believe, nay, are bound to believe, but, in compassion to our infirmity, is confirmed to us by the observation and experience of the wisest of men, *All is vanity—vanity of vanities*, and *vexation of spirit*, and would live up to their belief of it, it would save them a great deal of trouble; for how many sore crosses and afflictions does the worldliness of our hearts need and call for, to give us a sensible demonstration, that we may come under the needful conviction of the vanity of this world, and its insufficiency to make us happy.

How plainly may we read this, by the light of London's flames! How many well-furnished houses and shops were then consumed in a little time! It is part of the lamentation of the ruin of Babylon, that *in one hour so great riches is come to nought.*"[c] How many who were worth thousands over-night, were so impoverished by the fire, that they were worth nothing, or next to nothing, by the next morning! Like Job, whom the rising sun saw the richest of all the men of the east, and the setting sun left poor to a proverb. Our Saviour speaks of the danger we are in, of losing our treasures upon earth, by the moth that corrupts, or thieves that break through and steal;[d] but this loss of it by fire, is worse than either. What the moth has been in, may yet be good for something, and what the thief has stolen, may perhaps be recovered; but what the fire has consumed, is quite lost, and past retrieve.

How sudden and surprising was this desolation,

x Jer. v. 9. y Jer. xvii. 27. z Ezek. ix. 4. a Jer. xxxvi. 16. b Luke xxi. 12. c Rev. xviii. 17. d Matt. vi. 19.

how little thought of and expected by the sufferers, who hoped they had goods laid up for many years, and houses that should endure to many generations, when the fire comes with a warrant to seize them this night, and to strip them of all; and thereby to teach you and me not to boast ourselves of to-morrow, since we know not what a day, what a night, what an hour, may bring forth.[e] And in how little time was the desolation accomplished! Three or four days reduced to ashes buildings that had been long in rearing, and treasures that had been long in gathering.

This is a good reason why the rich man should not glory in his riches, for as the flower of the grass, which is scorched by the sun, they pass away[f] and are gone, and their place knows them no more; a good reason why we should not be secure in the enjoyment of our worldly possessions, nor flatter ourselves with the thought, that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant; that we shall die in our nest, and that our mountain stands so strong, that it cannot be moved, when we know not what a great change a very little time may produce.

It is a good reason why we should not make these perishing things our portion, nor lay up our treasure in them; and why we should sit loose to them, and take our affections off from them: for shall we set our eyes and hearts upon these things that are not, that make themselves wings and flee away;[g] that are liable to a thousand destructive casualties, and are therefore unworthy of our esteem and regard, especially, when they stand in competition with the true and everlasting riches? It is therefore our wisdom to be dead to these things, because if we be, we shall the better bear the disappointment, if they should be thus taken from us, and we shall easily say, it was what we looked for. Your houses, and shops, and goods are combustible things: call them so, and put a value upon them accordingly, as you do upon paper-buildings, and give all diligence to make that sure, which will be made sure. When Jerusalem's desolation was hastening on, the inhabitants had this needful admonition given them, *Arise ye, and depart, this is not your rest*, for *it is polluted*.[h] It is true of all things here below, they are polluted with sin, and are hastening towards their ruin, and therefore cannot be the repose of our souls. What then should we do, but arise and depart from them?

Neighbourhood, which is the pleasure of cities, where houses join so close, may prove of ill consequence, and serve but to spread and propagate the flames: of that therefore, no more than of other present comforts, let us not be over-fond.

IV. See how malicious the enemies of our peace and our holy religion are, and what need we have to stand upon our guard against them. There is a day that will bring to light the hidden works of darkness, and bring into judgment every secret thing, and to that day must be referred the full discovery of the cause of the fire of London. There was as full a demonstration given as could be, by the master of the house where the fire began, that it could not possibly be by accident, which gave abundant cause to think that it was designedly set on fire by Romish incendiaries, for the weakening of the protestant interest, which they have all along been, and still are, aiming at the destruction of.

The parliament met soon after the fire, and presently, even that House of Commons appointed a committee to inquire into the causes of the late fire; before whom abundance of informations were given in and proved, which were afterwards printed; but the parliament was prorogued before any judgment was given upon them. But it seems very evident, upon the concurring testimonies then given in, to which I refer you, that it was the execution of a popish design. One Robert Hubert, a French papist, being taken up upon suspicion, confessed that he was one of those who fired the baker's house, that was first set on fire, with a fire-ball; and he was executed for it. Many others were taken throwing fire-balls, but by some means or other made their escape, as appears by the report of that committee.

I would not be found insinuating any causeless, groundless jealousies, nor incensing men with enmities against the persons of any; our religion teaches us to forgive our enemies, and to pray to God to forgive them; we may not call for fire from heaven upon those who are set on fire of hell against us.[i]

But if this be true, as we have reason to think it is, surely it cannot but confirm and increase our detestation of popery, and fill us with a holy, heavenly zeal against that strong delusion. Can that be the religion of the meek and humble Jesus, which needs, and prescribes, and uses such methods for its own propagation, as not only Christianity abhors, but even humanity startles at, and is shocked by? Our Lord Jesus would not force his way, no not to Jerusalem, by destroying a poor village, and that of Samaritans too, that opposed him, and gave this reason for it, that the Son of man *came not to destroy men's lives* and dwellings, but to *save them*?[k] How far then are they from, nay, how contrary to, the spirit of Christ and his holy religion, who make no difficulty of destroying a great city, and that of Christians too, for the compassing of their design to reduce a people under the heavy yoke of their tyranny, that had happily escaped from under it. But no wonder they stumble not at heaps of ruins, when they startle not at seas of blood; but to gain their point, can wade through them without horror.

[e] Prov. xxvii. 1. [f] James i. 10. [g] Prov. xxiii. 5.

[h] Mic. ii. 10. [i] James iii. 6. [k] Luke ix. 56.

How many treasons, murders, and massacres, have not only been justified but consecrated, when they have been for the advancement of the pretended catholic cause! Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation, as in that of Simeon and Levi: *O my soul, come not thou into their secret.*[l]

And as it should increase our hatred of the Romish religion, so it should increase our dread of the Romish designs against us, and all that is dear to us. The extirpating of that which they call the Northern Heresy, is what they have been aiming at ever since the reformation; and we have no reason to think they have dropped the design, when not many years ago, it was carried so far, that it was next door to an accomplishment, and no less than a miracle of mercy saved our darling Isaac from being sacrificed to popish tyranny, when it lay bound upon the altar. Or, have we any reason to think that popery has altered its character? I wish we had: but the methods lately taken to root out the protestant religion in France, besides the persecution we hear of in Poland, at this time, and other instances, are sufficient to convince us, that popery is the same bloody, barbarous, inhuman thing, that ever it was, and therefore its advances towards us are to be as much dreaded as ever; that we may be quickened in our prayers to God, to fortify our bulwarks against that complication of sins and judgments, and to lift up a standard against that enemy, even when he comes in like a flood. Cry earnestly to God day and night, that he would turn all the counsels of popish Achitophels into foolishness; and I trust he will, as he has done many a time.

V. See how graciously God often remembers mercy in the midst of wrath, and in compassion takes up his controversy, when he might in justice proceed in it. You have a monument of the judgment, here where the fire began, but in every place where it stopt, the houses that escaped are so many monuments of sparing mercy. You can easily perceive, by the different materials and structure of the houses, just how far the fire proceeded: when you observe this, say, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,*[m] that all was not consumed, that God did not make a full end, but that, when he overthrew some of you, as he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, yet others of you were as brands plucked out of the burning.[n] The quenching of the fire at Taberah[o] is here recorded with the kindling of it, that we might learn to sing of mercy and judgment, and sing unto God of both, for in both his hand is to be seen.

When God had made London as a fiery oven in the day of his wrath, and the flames went on like a mighty army, conquering and to conquer, threatening to leave neither root nor branch; then God repented himself concerning his servants, his soul was grieved for the misery of London, and he said, *How shall I give thee up? How shall I deliver thee?* How shall I make thee as *Admah*, and set thee as Zeboim? In every place whither the fire had spread, much about the same time a check was given to it, and God said to the raging fire, as he does to the raging sea, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, here shall thy proud waves*, thy proud flames, *be staid.*

Let this be remembered with thankfulness to God, and to the praise of that mercy of his, which rejoiceth against judgment, and prevents its making a full end; and let us add to this, our own experience of the like seasonable interpositions of divine mercy for our relief. The earthly house of this tabernacle has perhaps been on fire with a fever, or some other wasting, consuming distemper, ready to reduce it to dust and ashes, yet God has staid the progress of it, has said unto us, Live, and the time was a time of love, not to be forgotten.

It ought to be taken notice of as an answer of prayer; we are told here, that when the fire of the Lord burnt in the camp of Israel, Moses, that great intercessor, and as such, a type of Christ, prayed unto the Lord, and then the fire was quenched. And no doubt when London was burning, there were a remnant of praying people standing in the gap, to turn away the wrath of God, who wept and made supplication, and in answer to their prayer, God spared a part of the city. The prophet Amos tells us that when, in his time, the Lord God called to contend by fire, he prayed, *O Lord God, cease I beseech thee*, and the Lord repented for this, *It shall not be, saith the Lord God.*[p]

Let this engage us to call upon God, and encourage us to trust in him in all our straits and difficulties, be they ever so great and threatening: he is a present help in time of need, and the necessity, as it engages his mercy, so it magnifies his power. If we can by faith depend upon him to save us, then when we think we perish, it shall be made to appear that even the winds and the seas obey him.

VI. See how wonderfully God can revive what seemed to be ruined. Now we are remembering the burning of this city, we must by no means overlook the rebuilding of it, and the raising up of another city, phœnix-like, out of the ashes of the old one. I am apt to think this seemed to them who lived then almost impracticable, and there were those who were ready to despair of it. How should they find money to rebuild their houses, and to contribute their share to the public buildings too, who had not only lost their goods in the fire, but lost in a manner their trades too, by which they and their families must subsist? and yet the Lord their God being with them, they built and prospered, and in two or three years, there scarce remained any marks or footsteps of the fire. You may easily imagine how great the destruction was, and yet you will hardly imagine it,

l Gen. xlix. 1, 6. m Lam iii 22. n Amos iv. 11.

o Numb. xi. 2. p Amos vii. 4—6.

when you observe how magnificent the repair of it is; for surely *the glory of the latter city is far greater than the glory of the former:* I wish it were so upon the account that the glory of the latter temple so far exceeded that of the former, which was the presence of Christ in it.

When God made of this city a heap, yet he did not make it to be no city, nor say concerning it, that it should never be built again;[q] it was desolate, but not, as Babylon, desolate for ever; no, nor as Jerusalem, that had seventy years accomplished in her desolation:[r] but in a little time God had mercy on your dwelling-places, as the prophet speaks, *and the city was built again on her own heap,*[s] and built again with advantage, more strong, more beautiful, and more uniform than it had been before; as if it had passed through a refining fire, rather than a consuming one, and had only been melted down to be cast in a better mould. *This was the Lord's doing,* for *except he build the house, they labour in vain that build it,*[t] and it may justly be *marvellous in our eyes.* God has fulfilled to you what he said of Zion and Jerusalem, Though *I was jealous against them with great fury,* yet *I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;* and O that the following promise to Jerusalem might be made good to London, It shall be called *a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain.*[u] How well were it, if the hearts of the citizens were as much improved by the fire, as their houses were!

Let this resurrection of the city out of its ashes, be to us an emblem of the state of Christ's church in the world; *it is persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed;*[v] its desolations may sometimes be said to be universal, but they shall not be perpetual. The protestant interest in many places is brought very low, and its ruins trampled on, by the same that triumphed in the ruins of this city of our solemnities, yet we have reason to hope it shall revive, and flourish again, even where it seems razed to the very foundations. It is promised concerning the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, that God will build again the ruins thereof,[w] and will set it up: when the time comes that Babylon must fall, (and fall it must sooner or later,) that promise shall be fulfilled. Let this quicken our prayers to God, for the re-establishing of the protestant religion, where it is borne down and trampled on, and let us continue instant in that prayer, and not faint, though we be sadly disappointed in the hands that we thought should have gone forward in the effecting of it; God will do his own work in his own way and time, if not by *might and power,* yet *by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts;* for so Jerusalem was rebuilt, and before that Spirit the mountains of difficulty that lay in the way became plain.[x] Our care must be to retain a sincere affection for our holy religion, how low soever the profession of it is, or may be brought, and not think the worse of it for its being deserted, and losing ground. It is the character of the servants of God, that when Zion is in ruins, they take pleasure even in its broken scattered stones, and favour the very dust thereof, they love the ground she stood upon; and let such assure themselves, that the *time to favour Zion, yea, the set time, will come.* And *when the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory,* and in doing it will put this honour upon the wrestling seed of Jacob, that therein he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.[y] Let Daniel's prayer therefore be ours, and his plea, that God would cause his face to shine upon the sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake.[z]

VII. See how dangerous our condition is, who have not been reformed by the various methods God has taken with us. You have long since seen your city rebuilt, and the effects of the fire no more remaining, which may supersede the annual memorial of the judgment: but if the ends of it be not answered, there is still occasion to revive the remembrance of it; may not God justly complain of us, as he did of Israel, You have sometimes been overthrown by signal judgments, and at other times saved by signal mercies, *yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.*[a] And we may therefore justly fear, that for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.[b] Is there any less sinning, or any more praying, in London than there was formerly? I wish there were. But we have too much reason to fear, that we come under Jerusalem's sad character, when the founder melted in vain.[c] Iniquity still abounds and goes barefaced, vice is as daring and threatening as ever; and what will be in the end thereof? May we not fear, lest God should send greater judgments among us, since lesser have not done their work, nor gained their point.

There are fires of another nature, which we have reason to fear the fatal effects of, both to the city, and to the land, I mean our unhappy divisions and animosities, and violent heats one against another: the sin that is in our divisions may be justly punished with the ruin that is commonly the effect of them, for a city or kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and becomes an easy prey to the common enemy, who warm their hands at those flames, and doubt not to find their account in setting us at variance one against another.

The removal of the gospel, and the taking away of our candlestick out of its place, would be a much sorer judgment than the burning of the city, and ought to be dreaded and deprecated accordingly. If papal tyranny should again take footing here, if our

q Isa. xxv. 2. r Dan. ix. 2. s Jer. xxx. 18. t Psal. cxxvii. 1.
u Zech. viii. 2, 3. v 2 Cor. iv. 9. w Acts xv. 16.
x Zech. iv. 6, 7. y Psal. cii. 13, 14, 16, 17. z Dan. ix. 17
a Amos. iv. 11. b Isa. ix. 17. c Jer. vi. 29.

Bibles should be taken from us, and our ministers be banished or put to death, if the idolatrous mass should be set up in our churches and the consecrated host carried about our streets to be adored, London would look a more melancholy place than it did when it was in ashes. I hope that God, who has hitherto by miracles of mercy saved our holy religion, will still, and that that blessed light shall not die in our hands; I hope it will never come to that; yet I must say we have no reason to be secure, when we consider the desert of our sins, and the designs of our enemies, and especially when we consider the desolations of divers protestant churches abroad, that once thought themselves as safe and as likely to continue as we do. *Go see what God did to Shiloh;* what he did to the seven churches of Asia; and let us not be high-minded but fear, for are we better than they?

The cause of truth and godliness shall be victorious at last, but may meet with many a hard struggle in the mean time. What trying times may be before us we cannot tell, but I am sure it is our wisdom to be prepared for the worst, by being more and more established in the truth as it is in Jesus, by sitting loose to the world, and treasuring up such comforts and experiences, as will carry us with courage and cheerfulness through the most mournful time, to a most joyful eternity; and then welcome the will of God.

The gospel is not tied to places; its privileges are movable things. The kingdom of God may be taken from us, and given to another nation;[d] and what will become of us, if our glory be departed, and all our pleasant things laid waste. The most effectual course we can take to prevent it, is to make a good use of our privileges, and live up to them; as the most threatening step toward it is the corrupting the nation with the vices of its neighbours, which will be as fatal to it as the idols and idolatries of the countries round about were to Israel of old.

I would not amuse people with causeless jealousies, but awaken people to a holy fear and diligence in their duty by these suggestions. There is a startling passage in Mr. George Herbert's poem, called the *Church Militant*, written I believe about eighty years ago, which has been much taken notice of. After he had showed how the church took rise in the eastern parts of the world, and so moved more and more westerly, he goes on thus:

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,
Ready to pass to the American strand,
When height of malice and prodigious lusts,
Impudent sinnings, witchcrafts, and distrusts
(The marks of future bane) shall fill our cup
Unto the brim, and make our measure up;
When Seine shall swallow Tyber, and the Thames,
By letting in them both, pollute her streams;
When Italy of us shall have her will,
And all her calendar of sins fulfil,
Whereby one may foretell what sins next year
Shall both in France and England domineer;
Then shall religion to America flee,
They have their times of gospel ev'n as we.

I remember I heard Dr. Tillotson (afterwards Archbishop) quote these verses of Mr. Herbert's, in a sermon on John xii. 35. *Yet a little while is the light with you;* (it is since printed in the second volume of the folio edition of his posthumous works;) and having explained the signs of the times to be this, "When the vices of Italy shall pass into France, and the vices of both shall overspread England, then the gospel will leave these parts of the world."—He makes this remark upon it, "Whether this was only the prudent conjecture and foresight of a wise man, or whether there be not something more prophetical in it, I cannot tell. But we have too much cause to apprehend, that if we do not reform and grow better, God will find some way or other to deprive us of that light, which is so abused and affronted by our wicked lives; and he seems now to say to us, as Christ did to the Jews, *yet a little while is the light with you.*"

VIII. See what a necessary and constant dependence we have upon God and his providence for our safety. You have seen how great a matter a little fire kindles, and in a little time, and cannot but think how much all you have in the world lies at the mercy of that merciless element, if God should give it commission. Though you be ever so careful of fire in your own houses, how many careless people are there in the houses about you, which, if set on fire, would soon set yours on fire; so that we can be no night secure, but that we may be either burnt *in* our beds, or burnt *out of them*. There have been frequent fires in and about the city since this great one, to put you in mind of what God has done, and what he could do; and many other accidents we and our families continually lie exposed to: the dreadful wind ten years ago, showed you that God has more arrows in his quiver, and can bring another judgment without bringing another fire.

Now this should engage us all to have our eye toward the Lord, by faith to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty;[e] and by prayer every morning and every evening, to put ourselves, our houses and families, under divine protection, and to beg that the city may be the care of God's providence in a particular manner, and the charge of his angels, as Jerusalem of old was. O that this argument might prevail with you, to set up and keep up the worship of God in your families, and to make a business of it, that though I cannot assure you that it will preserve

d Matt. xxi. 43.

e Ps. xci. 1.

you from your share in common calamities of this kind, all things come alike to all, yet it is the best course you can take to be safe and easy; with what a holy security may you lie down at night, and go abroad in the morning, when you have first solemnly recommended yourselves and yours to the mercy of God, and taken the way which he has appointed to engage him for you. Such is the comfort of doing this, such the satisfaction of having done it, that we may well call it work that is its own wages. If you make your houses little churches for God, he will make them little sanctuaries to you, and create a defence upon all your glory.[f]

You have your engines, your watchmen, your insurances, but after all, *Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*[g] It is therefore your great concern to make him your friend, and to keep yourselves in his love; to secure the favour of the Ruler of rulers, from whom every man's judgment proceeds.[h] He has put you into an easy way of doing this, not by costly sacrifices and offerings, but by faithful and fervent prayer, kept up in its life, and not sunk into a formality.

Neither pray ye for yourselves alone, and for your houses, but for the city, and parts adjoining, that in the safety thereof you may be safe. Thus approve yourselves true friends to the city, and seek the welfare of it. You are for conscience sake toward God, rendered incapable of serving the city in any civil offices, serve it so much the more with your prayers, serve it in sacred offices, as intercessors with God for it; and thank God you cannot be hindered from serving it in this way.

Nor is it enough to keep prayer up in your houses, but you must do what you can to keep sin out of your houses, lest that spoil the success of your prayers. *If iniquity be in thine hand*, any ill-got gain, or any ill way of getting, *put it far away*, and *let no wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles*, and then thou shalt *take thy rest in safety*, thou shalt *lie down, and none shall make thee afraid.*[i] And do what you can, in your places, to suppress wickedness in the city, and to promote the reformation of manners, that the city may be called *a city of righteousness, a faithful city*, which God may delight to dwell in.

IX. See what a dreadful day the great day of the Lord will be, when the world shall be on fire, and the earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. If the burning of London was so terrible, what then will the burning of the world be, the whole world? When *the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved*, and *the elements shall melt with fervent heat*, and *all these things shall be dissolved.*[k] The volcanos, or burning mountains, in Naples and Sicily, and many other places, which have been on fire as long as we have any history of those countries extant, are sometimes very terrible, and the eruptions of fire from them very threatening: surely Providence has wisely ordered those little conflagrations of the earth, to be earnests of the general conflagration, and standing, sensible confirmations of the Scripture tradition of it; nay, some have thought, that they will be in part the means of the burning of this world; so Dr. Tho. Burnet, in that part of his "Theory of the Earth," which treats *De conflagratione mundi—Of the conflagration of the world; Externus est et visibilis apparatus ad hoc incendium, in montibus ignivomis—There is evidently a provision in the fiery mountains for this desolation.* And he quotes a remarkable passage of Pliny, (l. ii. c. 106, 107.) when he had reckoned up several burning mountains, &c. he concludes, *Excedit profecto omnia miracula, ullum diem fuisse, in quo non cuncta conflagrarent—It is a miracle that the world is not on fire every day.* Why should it seem incredible to us then, that it will be on fire shortly? Believe it, sirs, as sure as you see this day, you shall see that day. And where will all the wealth and pride of this world be then? What will become of us, if we have all our portion and happiness in it?

Think of the fire in which the Lord Jesus will be revealed in that day, the flaming fire,[l] the fire that will devour before him;[m] he will come with an innumerable company of angels, and every one of those spirits is *a flame of fire.*[n] What flames then will the Judge be surrounded with! Think how you will look him in the face in that great and terrible day, and and how your works will abide that fire. Those who lived and died in sin, will then call in vain to rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of him that sits on the throne, and the wrath of the Lamb; but those who lived and died in Christ, will see no terror, no, not in that fire, but will then lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption draws nigh.

Nay, there is a fire yet more dreadful, which you are concerned to think of. The earth, and the works that are therein, will soon be burnt up; but there is a lake of fire and brimstone, which burns eternally, and shall never be quenched, prepared indeed for the devil and his angels, but into which all the wicked and ungodly shall be cast, by the irreversible sentence of the righteous Judge, and in which they shall be tormented world without end. I am here in God's name to give you warning to flee from that wrath to come,[o] by fleeing from sin, by fleeing to Christ; and whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, to testify unto you, that you come not to that place of torment; and if you hear not, if you heed not, Moses and the prophets, Christ and his ministers, giving you this warning, neither would ye be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.[p]

f Isa. lv. 5, 6. g Ps. cxxvii. 1. h Prov. xxv. 26. i Job xi. 14, 18, 19. k 2 Pet. iii. 12.

l 2 Thess. i. 8. m Ps. l. 3. n Ps. civ. 4. o Matt. iii. 6. p Luke xvi. 28, 31.

A BRIEF INQUIRY INTO

# THE TRUE NATURE OF SCHISM:

OR

# A PERSUASIVE TO CHRISTIAN LOVE AND CHARITY.

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THERE is scarce any one thing that has been discussed in the Christian world with more heat and noise among the several dividing parties, than the charge of schism. This has involved the disputing part of the church in the most violent engagements above twelve hundred years. Schism is so deformed a brat, that nobody has been willing to own it, a crime so very black, that each party has been studiously industrious to clear itself from the charge. To this indictment all have pleaded *Not guilty*; and we find none that have justified it. But here is the misery; such notions of it have been entertained, that it has been almost impossible to deny, without recriminating. And perhaps the most guilty have been most hot in charging others. Athaliah, the greatest traitor, is most loud in crying, *Treason, treason.*

We are all agreed that schism is an arch-rebel in Christ's kingdom; but in sending out the hue and cry after it, the difficulty is, how to describe it. Several attempts have been made; would it be in vain to try one more? Waving all inquiries into the several definitions and descriptions which have been given of it, let us have recourse to the law and to the testimony; for whoever speak in the things of God, (as they certainly do who speak of sin and duty,) if they speak not according to that rule, it is because there is no light in them.

Therefore I only premise this one postulatum, that nothing is to be accounted sin, but that which is made so by the word of God: *Tekel* is to be written upon nothing but that which has been carefully weighed in the balances of the sanctuary.

In our inquiry what is sin, let those books be opened which must be opened at the great day. If sinners must be judged by those books shortly, let sin be judged by them now, and let not any man or company of men in the world, assume a power to declare that to be sin, which the Sovereign Rector of the world has not declared to be so, lest in so doing they be found stepping into the throne of God, who is a jealous God, and will not give this branch of his glory to another.

Let us therefore see what the Scripture says concerning schism; not concerning the evil of it, we are convinced of that, but concerning the nature and *formalis ratio—due meaning* of it.

The Old Testament will not help us so much in this inquiry as the New; for as to the binding of Jews to worship only in one place, at Jerusalem, and to offer only upon that altar, it was a precept purely ceremonial, and to us Christians is vacated by that gospel rule, which wills us to pray every where, and their synagogues then (not their temple) were the patterns of Christian assemblies.

Only one scripture occurs in the Old Testament, which, perhaps, will help to rectify some mistakes about schism. It is the instance of Eldad and Medad, who prophesied in the camp. The case in short is this, Eldad and Medad were persons upon whom *the Spirit rested*, that is, who were by the extraordinary working of the Spirit endued with gifts equal to the rest of the seventy elders, and were *written*, that is, had a call to the work, but they *went not out unto the tabernacle* as the rest did, though God himself had appointed that they should, Numb. xi. 26. And *they prophesied in the camp*, that is, exercised their gifts in private among their neighbours in some common tent. Upon what inducements they did this, does not appear, but it is evident that it was their weakness and infirmity thus to separate from the rest of their brethren. If any think they prophesied by a necessitating and irresistible impulse, they may remember that *the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets.*[a]

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[a] 1 Cor. xiv. 32.

Now if some of the schismaticating doctors that the church had known, had but had the censuring of Eldad and Medad, we should soon have had a judgment given against them, much more severe than would have been awarded to him who gathered sticks on the sabbath-day.

And it is confessed, all the circumstances considered, it looks like a very great irregularity, especially as an infringement of the authority of Moses, which they who prophesied in the tabernacle under his presidency manifestly owned, and submitted to.

Well, an information was presently brought in against them, *v. 27. Eldad and Medad prophesied in the camp*, that is, to speak in the invidious language of the times, there is a conventicle at such a place, and Eldad and Medad are holding forth at it.

Joshua, in his zeal for that which he fancied to be the church's unity, and out of concern for the authority of Moses, brings in a bill to silence them; for as hot as he was, he would not have them fined and laid in the gaol for this disorder, neither; only, my lord Moses, forbid them; not compel them to come to the tabernacle, if they be not satisfied to come, only, for the future, prohibit their schismatical preaching in the camp. This seems a very good notion.

But hold, *Joshua, thou knowest not what manner of spirit thou art of.* Discerning Moses sees him actuated by a spirit of envy, and does not only deny, but severely reprove, the motion, Numb. xi. 29. *Enviest thou for my sake? Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets*, provided the Lord will but *put his Spirit upon them.* He is so far from looking upon it as schism, that he does not only tolerate, but encourage it. And O that all those who sit in Moses's chair, were but clothed with this spirit of Moses.

This instance is full enough to show, that all is not schism, which even wise and good men are apt to think is so.

But our special inquiry must be in the New Testament; and forasmuch as words are the signification of things, let us see what the Scripture means by this word schism.

The *critics* observe, that the Greek word Σχισμα is used eight times in the New Testament.

1. In a literal sense, for a rent in a garment, Σχισμα, *the rent is made worse.* In the same sense Σχιζω is used. As also of the rending of the vail. The cleaving of the heavens.[b] But this makes little to our purpose.

2. It is used figuratively for a division; and that twofold.[c]

(1.) A division in apprehension; so Σχισμα is used. In which places it signifies the different thoughts and apprehensions that the people or their rulers had concerning Christ, some thinking well of him, others not. Some accusing him, others excusing him.

In this sense Σχιζω is used, for the different sentiments the people had concerning Paul.[d]

Now this diversity of opinion, judgment, or apprehension, cannot be called or looked upon in itself as a thing criminal, inasmuch as there are many things which either because they are dark and obscure, and so not capable of demonstration, or because they are trivial and of light moment, and so not worth a demonstration, it is no matter what opinion men are of concerning them.

Only where the matter is weighty, and touches the fundamentals of Christianity, there an error is criminal, and if stubbornly persisted in, is heresy.

But the evil of it lies not in the diversity, but in the erroneousness and danger of the opinion.

I cannot believe that the greatest worshippers of the *Diana* of their own opinions, will be so sottish as to brand those for schismatics, who in every punctilio of opinion are not exactly of the same standard with themselves.

If there be any so strangely rigid, *let not my soul come into their secret*, for I despair to see even all the saints of a mind, in every thing, till they come to heaven.

It does therefore evidence too great a strangeness to the spirit of the gospel, to condemn all those who differ from us only in their apprehensions about little things. John's disciples were greatly displeased because Christ's disciples did not fast so often as they did, and quarrelled with Christ himself about it. And the answer of the meek and holy Jesus is worthy remark, that he gives a good reason why his disciples did not fast, viz. Because *the bridegroom was yet with them*; and yet does not condemn John's disciples that fasted often: which teaches us not to make our own opinions and practices (like Procrustes's bed) the standard by which to measure all others; and that in such cases we are to think it sufficient only to acquit ourselves, first to our own consciences, and then if need be to the world, without condemning others, who think and practise otherwise in such little things, and perhaps have as much reason for their thoughts and practices as we have for ours.

(2.) A division in affection: and in this sense it is used three times in the first epistle to the Corinthians, and no where else in all the New Testament.

We must particularly examine each place, that thence we may be furnished with a true notion of schism: and in plain terms, the case is whether a diversity (or, if you call it so, a separation) of communion be the *formalis ratio—due meaning* of schism.

[b] Matt. ix. 16. Mark ii. 21. John xix. 24. Luke v. 36. Matt. xxvii. 31. John xxi. 11. Mark i. 10.

[c] John vii. 43. John ix. 16. John x. 19.

[d] Acts xxiii. 7.

I find the word, and with it, no doubt, the thing, *I beseech you brethren—that there be no divisions* (Σχισματα) no *schisms* among you; so reads the margin of our Bibles.

Now to find out what this schism is, let us inquire into the exegetical exhortations that accompany it.

[1.] *That ye all speak the same things*, viz. in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity; for in little things it can never be made a duty to be of the same opinion, since it is morally impossible, but (as Estius seems to understand it) not to break Christian charity in your disputes about them.

Observe, he does not oblige us to think the same thing, but though your thoughts be divers, yet speak the same thing, that is, in your preaching and conversation, speak of those things only wherein you are agreed; and for those things wherein you differ, do not fall out and fight about them, but love one another notwithstanding.

[2.] That ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. Which must be understood of a serious endeavour after it; for otherwise a perfect conjunction must be reserved for a world of everlasting perfection.

But the meaning of the exhortation seems to be, that all their little heats and animosities should be swallowed up in an unanimous zeal for the great gospel truths, wherein they were all agreed.

We must inquire also into the Corinthians' miscarriage, which occasioned this caution, which you have, 1 Cor. i. 11, 12. there were contentions among them, v. 11. εριδες. So that schisms and contentions are one and the same thing, and it is worth noting, that Clemens Romanus, in that famous epistle of his to the Corinthians, still calls schisms εριδες—*contentions*.

Now the contention was about their ministers; *I am of Paul*, says one; *I am of Apollos*, says another, &c. Now he who was of Apollos was as much a schismatic, as he who was of Paul, because they quarrelled and fell out about so small and indifferent a matter.

Observe, it was not so much being of Paul and being of Apollos that made the schism; for Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas were all theirs, (*chap.* iii. 22.) but saying, *I am of Paul*, that is, crying him up as the only man for them, so as to despise others. If one went to hear Paul, and another went to hear Apollos, that did not make a schism, no, nor if one communicate with Paul, and another with Apollos; for why might not each go where he could be most edified? But the schism was, that they sacrificed Christian love and charity to this difference of apprehension. This is evident in that those who said, *I am of Christ*, so as to despise and censure, and quarrel with them that said *I am of Paul*, &c. are reproved equally with the rest.

Now the way of curing this schism was not to silence Apollos and Cephas, that whether they would or no they might all be of Paul; nay, it is well worth the observing that in the same epistle we find Paul very earnest with Apollos to go to Corinth, (xvi. 12.) *As touching Apollos, I greatly desired him to come to you.* Which he never would have done, if he had not preferred the common interest of souls' salvation before his own credit.

But the way to cure this was to convince them of the folly of the quarrels, how senseless and irrational they were; and to persuade them to lay aside their enmities and heart-burnings, and to love one another, and to walk hand in hand in the same way though they traced different paths, which they might well do when the paths lay so very near together.

By this instance it appears, that narrow-spiritedness which confines religion and the church to our way and party, whatever it is, to the condemning of others who differ from us in little things, is the great schismatising principle, which has been so much the bane of the Christian church; *Hinc illæ Lacrymæ—hence her sorrows.*

We find the word used, *I hear there be* Σχισματα—*divisions among you*, 1 Cor. xi. 18.

It is undeniably evident that it cannot be meant of any breach of communion, for it is said expressly (*v.* 20.) that they *came together in one place*, and that into the church too, that is, the place of meeting.

But the schisms were quarrels and contentions about some little things relating to the circumstances of public worship; and the quarrel seems to have been about the time of beginning their worship, especially when they were to join in the Lord's supper, or their love-feasts: it seems they did not come exactly at the time, therefore the apostle bids them *tarry one for another*, *v.* 33. Those who came early quarrelled with those who came late, for coming no sooner; and those who came late quarrelled with the other, for beginning before they came.

Some quarrels of this kind were the schisms here spoken of.

The word is used, *that there be no schism in the body.*[a] The apostle is there carrying on a metaphor betwixt the natural body, and the church; and this clause clearly relates to the natural body, for he does not come to the reddition of the comparison till *v.* 27.

Now, what he means by the schism in the body, is plain from the antithesis in the following words—*But that the members should have the same care one for another.* So that when the members care not one for another, when the eye says to the hand, I have no need of thee; (*v.* 21.) when there is not a sympathy and fellow-feeling among Christians, (*v.* 26.) here is schism.

That is schism which breaks or slackens the bond by which the members are knit together.

[a] 1 Cor. xii. 25.

Now, that bond is not an act of uniformity in point of communion, in the same modes and ceremonies; but true love and charity in point of affection. It is charity that is the *bond of perfectness*:[f] it is the unity of the Spirit that is the *bond of peace*,[g] and schism is that which breaks this bond.

Now from all this laid together, I draw out this description of schism, which, according to my present apprehensions, is the true scripture notion of it.

"Schism is an uncharitable distance, division, or alienation of affection among those who are called Christians, and agree in the fundamentals of religion, occasioned by their different apprehensions about little things."

This is the schism which the Scripture makes to be a sin, and by Scripture rules it must be judged. Schism (as indeed the root of all other sin) we see lies in the heart and affections. The tree is known by its fruits. The bitter root bears gall and wormwood. Let us therefore take a short view of those practices, which, according to this description, are schismatical practices.

1. Judging, censuring, and condemning those who differ from us in little things, is a schismatical practice, as it evidences a great alienation, if not enmity, of the affections. *Charity thinketh no evil*, οὐ λογιζεται το κακον—*does not reason evil*, does not study to make sins, but cover them; and if they be made, yet not to make the worst of them, it puts the best construction upon words and actions.

Now to pass a censorious judgment upon others, and to put the worst construction upon what they say and do, is certainly uncharitable, that is, schismatical. It is a practice often condemned in Holy Writ; *Judge not, that ye be not judged*;[h] it is construed a *judging of the law*.[i]

It is especially condemned with reference to the present case, of different apprehensions about little things, in that famous scripture, (Rom. xiv. 4, 5.) a scripture, which, if well studied and lived up to, would heal us all. Judging the heart is, in my estimation, one of the most uncharitable species of judging. Censuring the principles and ends of an action, which are secret, charging those who differ from us with hypocrisy, is a heart sin. If the appearance be good, and the outside be justifiable, when we conclude hypocrisy is in the heart, we step into the throne of God.

2. Laying a greater stress upon small matters of difference than they will bear, and widening the breach about them. As on the one hand, to censure all prayers by a form, or by this form in particular, as superstition, will-worship, formality, and the like: on the other hand, to censure all extempore praying as babbling, canting, froth, and noise, as if God had not accepted his own people in the one as well as the other. The fastening of a censure, and passing of a judgment upon a whole party and way, if it be not very clear and well-grounded indeed, will be likely to split us upon the rock of schism and uncharitableness.

3. Concluding hardly as to the spiritual state and condition of those who differ from us, excluding them out of the church, and from salvation, because they are not just of our mind in every punctilio.

Witness that notion which excludes out of the church, and consequently out of heaven, all those (how orthodox and serious soever they are otherwise) who are not in prelatical communion; if no diocesan bishops, then no ministers, no sacraments, no church, no salvation; which is certainly the most schismatical notion that ever was broached in the Christian world.

4. Reproaching, reviling, and railing at those who differ from us in little things, is another schismatical practice; fastening such nick-names upon them, and loading them with such reproaches, as carry in them all the odium that malice can infuse into them; dressing them up in bears' skins, and then baiting them, doing what we can by calumnies and misrepresentations, to alienate the affections of others from them.

5. Making, consenting to, approving, or executing of penal laws against those who differ from us in little things, to punish them for such difference in their persons, estates, or liberties, is another uncharitable or schismatical practice.

This is contention with a witness; which aims at no less than the ruin of a person contended with, in the dearest of his secular interests; to beat out his brains, because his head is not exactly of our size.

6. Separation from communion with those that we have joined ourselves to, without cause; give me leave to call it *separation for separation sake*, without any regard had to any thing amiss in the church we separate from, or any thing better in that we join ourselves to. This is an evidence of an uncharitable alienation of affection, and is consequently schismatical, when we quite cast off communion with our brethren, out of ambition, animosity to their persons, affectation of novelty and singularity, or the like.

This was manifestly the case of the Donatists, the infamous schismatics of the primitive church. Their principles were, that the church of Christ was to be found no where but in their sect, and all other churches were no churches; that true baptism was not administered but among them; and a great many barbarous outrages they committed in the heat of their separation.

7. An affected strangeness, or distance in commu-

f Col. iii. 14. g Eph. iv. 3.

h Matt. vii. 1. i James iv. 11, 12.

nion or conversation, from those who thus differ from us, upon the account of such difference, avoiding conversation and familiarity with them, carrying it strangely towards them, only because they do not wear the dividing name of our party.

This evidences an uncharitable alienation of affection prevailing in the heart, and is consequently schismatical.

Many such like practices might easily be mentioned, if it were needful; but they are obvious enough, especially if we look into the laws of charity: (1 Cor. xiii. 4—7.) and remember that all transgression of those laws is uncharitableness, and when that is found in the things of religion, it is schism. The corollary from the whole is this, that whoever they be that allow themselves in these and the like practices and affections towards their brethren, who differ from them in little things, whether they be Episcopal, Presbyterian, Independent, or by what name or title soever they are self-dignified and distinguished, they are so far schismatical, inasmuch as they break the great law of Christian charity.

Let us now try what inference may be drawn from the Scripture notion of schism.

1. If this be schism, then is it not within the line of any human power to make that separation to be schismatical, which was not so in itself. By the description given of schism, it does appear to be a thing, *malum in se—evil in itself*, which was not so before; an attempt of that kind would sink with its own weight. And therefore it is well worthy observation, that when the parliament made a law against conventicles, (which are the great schismatical eyesores,) they called it an act to prevent and suppress *seditious* conventicles, knowing it to be within their line to declare a thing to be sedition; but not schismatical conventicles, for that was a thing in which they could not concern themselves.

2. If this be schism, then the guilt of it is to be looked for in particular persons, and is not to be charged by wholesale upon parties of any denomination whatsoever; as among us at this day in the prelatical party there are some schismatical, and others not; and the same is to be said of the separating party; nay, who is there who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from this sin?" Have we not all need to pray, *From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness*, (which are the ingredients of schism,) *good Lord, deliver us*, both from the guilt, and from the power, of it? It is not so much our differences themselves, as the mismanagement of our differences, that is the bane of the church, burning up Christian love with the fire of our contentions.

*Whence come* these *wars and fightings? Come they not hence, even from our lusts?*[k] And those who say they are perfectly free from these warfaring schismatic lusts, must give me leave to say, I doubt they deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them.

3. If this be schism, then there may be schism where there is no separation of communion; that is plain from the instance of the Corinthians, who came together into *one* place, and yet are blamed for being schismatical. Bringing people to one place will never cure a schism, till they are brought to be of one accord.

You may bind the leopard, and lay him down by the lamb, and yet the enmity remain as great as ever, except there be an inward change.

A quarrel about little things may likewise be schismatical on one side, and not on the other. Jeremiah was a man of strife and contention,[l] that is, a man striven and contended with, and yet no schismatic; though ordinarily (as it is commonly said of domestic differences) there are faults more or less on both sides.

4. If this be schism, then there may be separation of communion where there is no schism. For thus we all agree, that there may be a difference of apprehension, and yet no schism; provided it do not eat out Christian love, but be managed amicably, as between the Arminians and Calvinists, in the church of England, and divers the like.

Now if this difference of apprehension relate to worship or communion, and the modes or terms thereof, there cannot but be a strong inclination to separate in whole or in part, according as the difference of apprehension is; for do what we can, as long as we are rational creatures, the understanding will have the directing of the will.

Now surely this separation, (if we must call it so,) or rather, this variety and diversity of worship and communion, may be managed without schism, provided Christian love and charity be kept entire notwithstanding.

For can any imagine that a difference of apprehension, in regard of worship and discipline, should be more schismatical than difference of apprehension in doctrine; since, of the two, doctrinal truths seem more essential to Christianity?

But to come a little closer. The meetings of the dissenters (though now, blessed be God, permitted and allowed of by the law of the land, yet) are commonly charged with being schismatical. The great outcry is, that we leave the church; and the unthinking mobile, who are so well taught as to know no other churches but the public places of worship, are easily induced to believe it; as if it were schism to worship God any where else, let the worship there be what it will.

Those who will allow themselves the liberty of an unprejudiced thought, cannot but see the difference so small, that as long as we believe the same Chris-

[k] Jam. iv. 1.

[l] Jer. xv. 10.

tian faith, and agree in the same protestant abhorrence of papal delusions, we may easily be looked upon as one and the same church, as well as two several parish churches may, especially being united under the care and protection of one protestant king, and members of the same protestant commonwealth.

(1.) I do from the bottom of my soul detest and abhor all separation from the parish churches to atheism, irreligion, and sensuality, *(who separate themselves, sensual,*[m]*)* who forsake the church to go to the alehouse or tavern, or to their secular business, or to their slothfulness and laziness, to *separate unto that shame.*[n] And if this separation had been more animadverted upon than it has been of late, probably the cure of schism would have been sooner effected thereby, than by severities that have been used against conscientious separatists.

(2.) I do likewise abhor all schismatical, that is, uncharitable, proud, censorious, rigid separation; such separation as theirs who condemn the parish churches as no parts of the visible church, who rail at ministers as Babylonish and antichristian: this is a horrid breach of the law of Christian love, and that which every good heart cannot but rise at the thoughts of.

And yet I cannot but say, and am satisfied in it, that there may be a lawful and justifiable separation, (though I would rather call it a diversity of communion from the parish churches,) which I shall endeavour to clear in three cases.

[1.] If my own conscience be not satisfied in the lawfulness of any terms of communion imposed, as far as I fall under that imposition, I may justify a separation from them, and a joining with other churches, where I may be freed from that imposition, provided that this be not done schismatically, that is, with heat and bitterness, and alienation of Christian affection. And I hope none that have the law of Christ written in their hearts will say, that it is impossible truly to love those with whom I am not satisfied to join in all the ordinances, for the sake of some ceremonies, with which, after all my study, prayer, and conversation, I cannot be satisfied.

So, if I be a minister, and as such obliged to preach the gospel, yet kept out from the public exercise of my ministry by such terms and conditions, oaths and subscriptions, as I judge sinful; in such a case surely it is lawful for me, with Eldad and Medad, to prophesy in the camp, since in my judgment the door of the tabernacle is made narrower than my Master has appointed it to be made. What should hinder but that, as a minister of Christ, I may administer all the ordinances, according to Christ's institution, to those who are willing to join with me, and put themselves under my conduct (such as it is) in those administrations? If God has given though but one talent, it must be traded with, or else there will be an uncomfortable reckoning shortly, especially when we look abroad, and consider how the apparent necessity of precious souls call for our utmost diligence in our Master's work; and indeed there is work enough for us all, if God would give us hearts to be serious and unanimous in it.

In this also it is always provided, that my agency in a ministerial station be not made schismatical by my heat, passion, and bitterness; but that I live in true love and charity with those whom by reason of the impositions I cannot, *salva conscientia—with a pure conscience*, join with in communion.

[2.] Though I be satisfied in the lawfulness of the terms of communion required, and so when purer administrations are not to be had, may, rather than live in a total want of the ordinances, comply with them, yet when I have an opportunity of enjoying those ordinances in a way which I judge more pure and scriptural, or which I think more lively and edifying, and more likely to attain the great end of all ordinances, and that contribute more to my comfort and holiness, and communion with God; in such a case I cannot see but that I may lawfully have recourse to such administrations, though thereby I may seem to separate from another church, wherein before I had joined, and for which I still retain a very charitable opinion and affection. If the magistrate should be so unreasonable as to impose upon me an unskilful physician, to be alone made use of in case of sickness, I might take him rather than none; but if there be another, who, I am sure, has more skill and will to help me, I think I should be accessary to the ruin of my health and life, if I should not make use of him, notwithstanding such an inhibition.

And is not the life, and health, and salvation of my immortal soul dearer to me than any other concern? Is not communion with God the sweetest and most precious of all my delights? Is it not the life of my soul, and the crown of all my joys? And are not those administrations most desirable in which I find myself most edified? Must I then be such an enemy to my own comfort and happiness, as to throw away all opportunities which I might have of that kind, only in a compliment? *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas—Socrates is my friend, Plato is my friend, but truth is my best friend.* The bishops are my friends, and the ministers my friends, and I have a true love for them, but charity begins at home, especially when my precious soul, more worth than all the world, lies at stake.

This case is somewhat the clearer in those parishes

[m] Jude 19.

[n] Hos. ix. 10.

where the public ministers are either ignorant, profane, or malignant.

[3.] Nay, suppose I am so well satisfied in communion with the parish churches in all administrations, as not to desire better, or not to expect better, in the dissenters' meetings, yet I cannot see what schism, that is, what breach of Christian love and charity, there is in it, for me to be present sometimes in the congregations of the sober dissenters, and to join with them who worship the same God, in the name of the same Mediator, read and preach the same word, and live in hopes of the same inheritance, and differ from me only in some little things which I think not worth contending for, scarce worth the mentioning; hereby to evidence my universal love and catholic charity, and that I am not of narrow, schismatical, dividing principles, nor one who will sacrifice Christian love to the petty trifling fancies and interests of a party.

The sober dissenters are such as I have reason to hope have communion with God in what they do, and therefore why should not I now and then have communion with them? *In every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of him;* and why should he not be accepted of me? Why may not I have fellowship with them who have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.[o] To fancy schism, that is, uncharitable contention and a breach of Christian love, in this is very absurd.

*Obj.* But hereby I encourage a schism, and countenance them in their separation from that which in my estimation is lawful and good, and does not give just cause for such a separation.

*Answ.* There must be grains of allowance for difference of apprehension, different capacities, constitutions, and inclinations; custom, and especially education, must be put into the scale; and while I walk according to the light which God has given me, I must charitably believe that others do so to.

Whether the dissenters' meetings be as to the constitution of them (looking upon them only as diversities of communion) schismatical, has been considered already, and found otherwise by Scripture light.

The common outcry is, that it is the setting up of altar *against* altar: which is not so; for at the most it is but altar *by* altar; and though I have often read of one body, and one Spirit, and one hope, and one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism, and one God and Father,[p] yet I could never find a word in all the New Testament of one altar,[q] except Jesus Christ, the altar that sanctifies every gift, in whom we all centre. And if there be any of the dissenters who are schismatical, that is, contentious, bitter, and uncharitable in their separation, let them bear their own burthen, but by my presence with them I encourage that in them, no more than I do too much of a like spirit in too many of those who are called the church-of-England men, by my adherence to them.

To conclude. By all this it is evident that unity of affection is the thing to be laboured after, more than uniformity in modes and ceremonies. We have been long enough trying to root schism out of the church, *vi et armis—by impositions, fines, and penalties*, choking our brethren, because their throats have not been so wide as ours. And it has been found ineffectual, even in the judgment of our great Sanhedrim, who have declared that "giving ease to scrupulous consciences is the likeliest way to unite their Majesty's protestant subjects in interest and affection." What if we should now try another method, and turn the stream of our endeavours into another channel? Hitherto we have been as it were striving which should hate one another most; what if we should now strive which should love one another best, and be most ready to do all offices of true charity and kindness, and bury all our little feuds and animosities in that blessed grave of Christian love and charity?

What if we should every one of us, of each party, (as we have been too often called,) set ourselves by our preaching to promote and propagate the gospel of *peace*, and by our prayers to prevail with God for a more plentiful pouring out of the Spirit of *peace*, that the dividing names of *Baalim* may be taken out of our mouths, and that, however it goes with uniformity of ceremony, we may keep the unity of the Spirit? And then I doubt not but that we should soon see our English Jerusalem established a praise in the midst of the earth.

And yet I am afraid even saints will be men; there will be remainders even of those corruptions which are the seed of schism, in the best, till we all come to the perfect man.

And that is the comfort of my soul, that if we can but once get to heaven, we shall be for ever out of the noise and hurry of this quarrelsome, contentious, dividing world, and the church triumphant shall be no more militant, but that happy world of everlasting light will be a world of everlasting love.

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[o] 1 John i. 3. [p] Eph. iv. 4—6. [q] Heb. xiii. 10.

# THE LAY-MAN'S REASONS

FOR HIS

JOINING IN STATED COMMUNION WITH

# A CONGREGATION OF MODERATE DISSENTERS.

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My case, in short, is this. I am born in a Christian nation, and baptized into the Christian faith; and I reckon it my unspeakable honour and happiness that I am so, and that I live in the times of reformation. In this nation, wherever I am, I find public assemblies for religious worship, all agreeing to worship the same God, in the name of the same Mediator, under the conduct and influence of the same Spirit, according to the rule of the same Scriptures, holding communion with the universal church in faith, hope, and love, under the presidency of gospel ministers, by the same ordinances of the word, sacraments, and prayer, looking for the same blessed hope. All these assemblies concur, in their testimony, not only against Jews, Pagans, and Mahometans abroad, but against atheists, infidels, and profane at home; and likewise in their protestation against the tyranny and idolatry of the church and court of Rome.

But I find there is some difference among these Christian assemblies. Though all good Christians are one in Christ by faith, and one with each other by holy love, yet in outward and lesser things I observe they do not all agree. And it is no surprise to me that they do not; for I know that the best are imperfect in this world. I find some of these assemblies, and, indeed, far the greatest number, established and appointed by an act of parliament at the time of the happy restoration, 14 Car. 2. The ministers presiding in these assemblies, ordained by bishops, usually presented by lay-patrons, and to the great advantage of their ministry, dignified, and honourably provided for, by the civil government. The ordinances administered in these assemblies according to the book of Common Prayer, and the discipline managed by the chancellor of the diocese, and his court.

I find some few of these assemblies permitted and allowed by another act of parliament, twenty-seven years after the former, at the time of the late glorious revolution, 1 William and Mary. The ministers presiding in them ordained by presbyters, chosen by the people, and though taken under the protection, yet destitute of the authority and support, of the civil powers. The ordinances administered in them not by a set, prescribed, constant form, but by the rule of the Scripture in general, and according to the measure of the gift given to him that ministers. The discipline managed by the minister himself, who presides in other ordinances, with the advice and concurrence of the congregation. Providence has so cast my lot, and appointed the bounds of my habitation, that assemblies of both these kinds are within my reach.

And, through the grace of God, I think I can truly say, this is my character. I am heartily concerned about my soul, and my everlasting condition: it is my care and desire to please God, and to work out my salvation. All other interests and concerns are nothing to me, in comparison with this. I seriously profess I am afraid of sin, and am solicitous to be found in the way of my duty, and to get all the help I can to forward me toward heaven, and to fit me for it. Hereunto I can add this further protestation, that, through the grace of God, I have a catholic charity for all good Christians. I cannot monopolize the church; it is narrow enough, I dare not make it narrower: I love a good man, whatever party he belongs to, and him who follows Christ, though he does not follow with me. *He that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of God*, and shall be accepted by me. My practice is this. I join myself sometimes with the assemblies of the public establishment, if any opportunity offers itself on a week day; or if I happen on the Lord's day to be out of the reach of such assemblies as I choose

statedly to join with, I freely and cheerfully attend the divine service of the church, knowing nothing in the prayers but what I can heartily say Amen to, which I choose rather to do, than to answer aloud after the minister. And this I do, that I may testify the catholic charity, and my communion with, and affection to, all good Christians, though I be not in every thing of their mind. Hereby, likewise, I endeavour to fulfil all righteousness, and, in my place, I bear my testimony to that which is of God in the public establishment, wherein I do rejoice, and will rejoice.

But I constantly join in all the ordinances with a congregation of moderate and sober dissenters: with them I hold stated communion; and with them, after many serious and impartial thoughts, have put myself under the ministerial conduct and inspection of a preacher or teacher allowed, though not authorized by the law of the land; but one who is manifested in my conscience to be a true and faithful minister of Jesus Christ.

The reasons why I choose my settled communion with the dissenters, are these six, which abundantly satisfy my own conscience at present, not judging other men's consciences, nor knowing what further light God may hereafter give me in this matter.

1. I think it is my duty to own and adhere to that ministry which seems to me to be wrongfully and injuriously excluded from the public establishment; and the exclusion of which was professedly intended and designed by the Act of Uniformity. By making such oaths, declarations, and subscriptions, the indispensable terms of their admission into the ministry, or continuance in it, as they could not comply with, without sinning against their consciences, they were and are effectually shut out from the public establishment. This I take to be a wrong both to them who are well worthy of the church's double honours, and to the church which stands in need of, and would be greatly benefited by, their useful labours. I therefore think that I ought, in my place, both to bear my testimony against the exclusion of them, (lest I should partake with other men's sins, and should be found to have laid a confederacy with those who put so many burning shining lights under a bushel,) and also to aid, assist, and encourage those who are so excluded; putting my soul into their soul's stead, and then doing as I would be done by. Were I a minister, I must be shut out as they are, and should expect to be countenanced in suffering for conscience sake; and therefore cannot but countenance them. And this is that which I verily believe most men will do when it comes to be their own case, whatever they talk when they are uppermost. Those who, at any time, have thought themselves unjustly restrained from the public exercise of their ministry, have ever yet thought themselves obliged to exercise it in private as they could, and their friends obliged to stand by them in it; and so I believe they ever will.

2. I think it is my duty to choose rather statedly to join in those administrations, which come nearest to the divine institution, than in those which have in them an unnecessary mixture of human invention. How far men may lawfully devise and use ceremonies of their own, under pretence of beautifying God's ordinances, and edifying themselves and others, I pretend not to be a competent judge: but to me it seems very plain, that the ordinances of Christ are purer, and look better, without them; and that those who make the Scripture only their rule, and admit nothing into their worship but what is warranted by it, are to be preferred much before those who practise many things in their stated public worship, which they do not produce any ground or warrant for in the Holy Scripture. To me it seems much better in baptism, only to wash a child with water, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in token that he shall not be ashamed to confess Christ crucified, which is Christ's institution, than, besides that, in token of the same thing, to sign him with the sign of the cross; and in the Lord's supper, to use the gesture Christ's disciples used, rather than another devised by men. Having chosen the Scripture for the standing rule of my faith and practice, I choose to have communion with those who seem to me to keep most closely to it.

3. I think it is my duty to choose rather statedly to join with those who assert and maintain the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, than with those who willingly submit to the impositions of men in the things of God, and justify those impositions. I am very well satisfied, that when my Redeemer, in kindness to his church, broke the yoke of that ceremonial law, which was given by Moses, he did not leave it in the power of any man, or company of men, in the world, to make another like yoke, and lay that upon the necks of the disciples. I doubt not but there is a power in the Christian magistrates, or other governors of the church, to restrain and correct natural indecencies in any of the necessary circumstances of public worship; as time, place, habit, or gesture: and that, in any of these, which unavoidably renders the administration of the ordinances either despicable, or inconvenient, or unprofitable, to those who attend upon them. But I see nothing in the gospel which warrants any governors, civil or sacred, to impose such habits and gestures as they please (because they think them decent) upon those who think them incongruous; and then, to make the use of them the indispensable condition of their communion. In the religious assemblies of the dissenters I observe, that generally every thing is done with the gravity and decorum that becomes the solemnity there performed: I see no uncouth habits, I hear no noisy responses, but all

things are managed decently, and in order, with reverence, and to edification: and yet no ceremonies are imposed, no terms of communion made, which Christ has not made; no days made holy, but that which God has made so; no stress laid upon the holiness of places, which the New Testament gives not the least hint of since the destruction of the temple; and therefore I choose to join with them; for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*. Their ministers are not tied up to any one prescribed form of prayer, but are at liberty to vary and enlarge according to the improvements of their knowledge, and warmth of their devotion, and the case of those whose mouth they are in prayer: And, as I think, every minister ought to have some competent measure of the gift of prayer, as well as preaching; and that otherwise he is not duly qualified; so, I think, having that ability, he ought not to be abridged of his liberty to use it; especially not in the administration of sacraments. *All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any.*[a]

4. I think it is my duty to choose rather to join with those, who refuse to admit into the communion with them such as are openly vicious and profane, than with those who, being under an unhappy obligation to administer the Lord's supper to all in office, and to transfer the trial of all suspensions to the bishop's court, cannot possibly use so strict a discipline. Not that I think I am ever the worse for bad people's joining with me in the Lord's supper, but perhaps they are the worse for my joining with them; and I would not be accessary to the hardening of them in their impieties. I do not expect to meet with any society of Christians perfectly pure on this side heaven; there are spots, I know, in our feasts of charity; but I must prefer those who appear to me either to be more pure from the mixture of corrupt members, or at least more solicitous and desirous to be so, and more capable of being so by their own constitution. I have seen, with much satisfaction, many of the church of England zealous against vice and profaneness, and active for the suppressing of it, and have a mighty value and veneration for them upon that account; and wish their constitution would allow them to do more, by church-censures, in prosecution of that worthy design than I apprehend it will. But for that pious zeal of theirs, I have so often heard them called presbyterians by those who are bigots for episcopacy and the ceremonies, that I confess it has made me love the presbyterians the better, since zeal against profaneness enters so much into their character, even their enemies themselves being judges.

5. I think it is my duty to choose rather to join with those churches, whose constitution leaves room for a catholic and comprehensive charity, than with those whose avowed principles and sentiments force them to monopolize the church in England to themselves, and forbid them to own the dissenting ministers as true ministers, and their churches as true churches. This, I confess, has a mighty influence on me. The sober dissenting ministers, as I am acquainted with them, are manifest in my conscience to be faithful ministers of Jesus Christ; and in their administrations I cannot but see the institution of ordinances observed, and every thing well fitted to answer the end of them. I know many who constantly attend in their assemblies, and have observed them to be sound in their principles, sober in their lives, honest in their dealings, constant in their devotions, and in all instances to have given undeniable proof of their being sincere good Christians. When, therefore, in the books and sermons that plead for the church of England, I find these ministers censured and condemned as usurpers, impostors, and lay-intruders; all their administrations nulled, their assemblies denied to be parts of the catholic church, all who join with them sentenced as schismatics to the pit of hell, and no hopes of salvation given them, but what God's general mercy allows to moral heathens; and all the reformed churches, that have no bishops, falling so far under the same censure, that their ministers cannot be admitted ministers of the church of England, unless they be re-ordained, while those who have been popish priests may; and all these harsh censures excused from uncharitableness with this, that they cannot help it, their principles lead them to it: then, think I, the Lord deliver me from such principles, and from that pretended unity, which is destructive of real charity. On the other side, I find the dissenters willingly owning the established churches as true churches, their ministers as true ministers, their principles leading them to do so. I often hear them, in their public assemblies, pray for them, and for their success in their ministry, and profess their communion with them in faith, hope, and love; and in their common conversation, I hear them speak of them with love and respect. My judgment and inclination lead me to the charitable side, as the best and safest; and by all I have read and heard in this controversy, that appears to me to be the side of the dissenters.

6. I think it is my duty to attend on those administrations which I find to be most for my edification in faith, holiness, and comfort, and best (with me) to answer the ends of holy ordinances. Herein I hope I may be allowed to judge for myself. I have often tried both; and if I know my own heart, without prejudice or partiality, I must say, that I have found my heart more affected and enlarged in those confessions, prayers, and thanksgivings, which have been offered up without a stated prescribed form,

[a] 1 Cor. vi. 12.

than ever it was in those that have been invariably tied up to certain words. Far be it from me to make comparison of men's abilities and performances: I greatly honour and value the gifts and labours of many who are in the public establishment; but, to my capacity, the dissenters' praying and preaching is most adapted, and most profitable; and those I am to reckon the best gifts, and to covet earnestly, which I find by experience best for me. Sabbath-time is precious; and I would willingly improve it so as will be most for my advantage in keeping my communion with God, and preparing for heaven. If it be owing to my own weakness that these administrations are most agreeable to me, yet while I sincerely design God's glory, and my own spiritual benefit therein, I trust, through Christ, that God will not only forgive me, but accept me, and that they also who are strong, will bear with my infirmities.

These are the principles I go upon, and from them I conclude,

(1.) That if the present dictate of my conscience and practical judgment be, that it is my duty to choose my stated communion with the congregations of dissenters, then it is my sin if I do not do it; for *to him that knows to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.*

(2.) Then, by occasional communion with the church of England, whereby I design to testify my charity and catholic communion, and my approbation of that in it which is good, I do not in the least condemn my stated communion with the dissenters; for though I am not convinced that it is a sin of commission at any time to join with the established church, nor that any thing in itself unlawful is required as the condition of lay-communion, yet, upon the grounds aforesaid, I am fully convinced it would be a sin of omission not to join with the dissenters. I will not condemn any thing that is good, when a better is not in my reach; but when it is, I think I am obliged, in duty to God, and in concern for my own soul, to prefer it. *All things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*

(3.) Then, in all this, I am far from judging and censuring those who differ from me. I walk according to my present light, preferring that which I think and find to be best; and I verily believe those good Christians who, I know, constantly join with the public establishment do so too, preferring that which they think and find to be the best; and both they and I (I trust) are accepted of God. To those who condemn me herein, I shall only offer that reasonable demand of St. Paul: *If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that as he is Christ's, even so are we Christ's.*[b]

[b] 2 Cor. x. 7.

# A PLAIN

# CATECHISM FOR CHILDREN.

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### INTRODUCTION.

I SHOULD not have thought of drawing up, much less of publishing, this little CATECHISM, with its *Appendix*, if I had not been solicited to it by some of my friends, whose judgment and advice I have a great deal of reason to put a value upon.

The children into whose hands it is designed to be put, are supposed to have learned the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, those first forms of sound words; and then perhaps some time spent in this, may prepare them afterwards to improve by the fulness and accuracy of the *Assembly's Catechism*, with which this does very little interfere, and which therefore, I hope, it will not be suspected of a design to supersede.

Whether such a catechism as this be so needful, as some have said they think it is, I know not. However, I hope it may be useful to some; and therefore I am willing to let it go abroad; and the blessing of heaven go along with it.

It is God's promise, that *all shall know him, from the least even to the greatest.* That that promise may be fulfilled, and all pious endeavours, for the propagating of Christian knowledge, crowned with success, is my heart's desire and prayer.

*July 7th*, 1703. MATTH. HENRY.

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### PART I.

*Of God and the Scriptures.*

Q. 1. WHAT must you do in the days of your youth? A. I must remember my Creator. Q. 2. Who is your Creator? A. The great God, who made the world. Q. 3. Who is your Preserver? A. The same God, who made me, preserves and maintains me; and in him I live, and move, and have my being. Q. 4. What are you made and maintained for? A. To glorify God. Q. 5. What do you believe concerning this God? A. I believe that he is an infinite and eternal Spirit, most wise and powerful, holy, just, and good. Q. 6. How many gods are there? A. There is but one God. Q. 7. How many persons are there in the godhead? A. Three: the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and these three are one. Q. 8. What is your duty to this God as your Creator? A. It is my duty to fear and honour him, to worship and obey him, and in all my ways to trust in him, and to please him. Q. 9. What is the rule of your faith and obedience? A. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, which we call the BIBLE. Q. 10. What is the excellency of that book? A. It is the word of God. Q. 11. What use will it be of to you? A. It is able to make me wise to salvation.

### PART II.

*Of our Misery by Sin, and our Redemption by Christ.*

Q. 12. WHO were your first parents? A. Adam and Eve, from whom we are all descended. Q. 13. What condition did God create them in? A. Holy and happy. Q. 14. How did they lose their holiness and happiness? A. By their disobedience to the command of God, in eating the forbidden fruit. Q. 15. What condition are we all born in? A. Sinful and miserable. Q. 16. How do you perceive your condition to be by nature sinful? A. Because I find I am naturally prone to that which is evil, and backward to that which is good; and foolishness is bound up in my heart. Q. 17. How do you perceive your condition to be by nature miserable? A. Because I find myself liable to many troubles in this life; and the Scripture tells me, I am by nature a child of wrath. Q. 18. What would become of you then without a Saviour? A. I should be certainly lost and undone for ever. Q. 19. Who is it that saves us out of this sad condition? A. Our Lord

Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man. Q. 20. Who was Jesus Christ? A. The eternal Son of God. Q. 21. What did he do to redeem and save us? A. He took our nature upon him, and became man. Q. 22. What life did he live in that nature? A. A life of perfect holiness, leaving us an example. Q. 23. What doctrine did he preach? A. A true and excellent doctrine, concerning God and himself, and another world. Q. 24. What miracles did he work to confirm his doctrine? A. He healed the sick with a word; raised the dead, cast out devils, and many other the like. Q. 25. What death did he die? A. The *cursed* death of the cross, to satisfy for our sins, and to reconcile us to God. Q. 26. What became of him after he was dead? A. He arose again from the dead on the third day, and ascended up into heaven. Q. 27. Where is he now? A. He is at the right hand of God, where he ever lives, making intercession for us, and has all power both in heaven and earth. Q. 28. When will he come again? A. He will come again in glory at the last day to judge the world.

## PART III.

*Concerning Baptism and the Covenant of Grace.*

Q. 29. WHAT relation do you stand in to the Lord Jesus? A. I am one of his disciples; for I am a baptized Christian. Q. 30. Into whose name were you baptized? A. Into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Q. 31. What was the meaning of your being so baptized? A. I was thereby given up in a covenant way, to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Q. 32. What was the covenant which was signified and sealed in your baptism? A. The covenant of grace made with us in Jesus Christ. Q. 33. What is the sum of that covenant? A. That God will be in Christ to us a God, and we must be to him a people. Q. 34. How then must you take the Lord for your God? A. I must take God the Father for my chief good, and highest end; God the Son, for my Prince and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost, for my Sanctifier, Guide, and Comforter. Q. 35. How must you give up yourself to him to be one of his people? A. I must deny all ungodliness, and worldly, fleshly lusts, and must resolve to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope. Q. 36. What are the three great blessings promised in this covenant? A. The pardon of sin, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life. Q. 37. What are the two great conditions of this covenant? A. Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Q. 38. What is it to repent of your sins? A. It is to be sorry that I have offended God, in what I have done amiss, and to do so no more. Q. 39. What is it to believe in Jesus Christ? A. It is to receive him, and to rely upon him as my Prophet, Priest, and King, and to give up myself to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him.

## PART IV.

*Concerning our Duty to God, Ourselves, and our Neighbour.*

Q. 40. How must you evidence the sincerity of your faith and repentance? A. By a diligent and conscientious obedience to all God's commandments. Q. 41. What is the first and great commandment? A. To love God with all my heart. Q. 42. What is the second, which is like unto it? A. To love my neighbour as myself, and to show it, by doing as I would be done by. Q. 43. What is the honour you owe to God's name? A. I must never take his name in vain; but must always make mention of it with reverence and seriousness. Q. 44. What is the honour you owe to God's word? A. I must read it and hear it with diligence and attention: I must meditate upon it, believe, and frame my life according to it. Q. 45. What is the honour you owe to God in his providence? A. I must receive all his mercies with thankfulness, and I must bear all afflictions with patience, and submission to his holy will. Q. 46. What is the honour you owe to the Lord's day? A. I must keep the sabbath holy to God, by a diligent performance of the religious duties of the day, both public and private, not speaking my own words, nor doing my own works on that day. Q. 47. How must you honour God in prayer? A. I must every day, by solemn prayer, seek the favour of God, and give unto him the glory due unto his name. Q. 48. In whose name must you pray? A. In the name of Jesus Christ only. Q. 49. What must you pray for? A. For mercy to pardon, and grace to help in time of need. Q. 50. What else must you do in your prayers? A. I must confess my sins, and give God praise for his goodness to me. Q. 51. What must be your daily care concerning your own soul? A. I must take care that my heart be not lifted up with pride, nor disturbed with anger, or any sinful passion. Q. 52. What must be your care concerning your body? A. I must take care that it be not defiled by intemperance, uncleanness, or any fleshly lusts. Q. 53. What must be your care concerning your words? A. I must never tell a lie, nor mock at any body, nor call nick-names, nor speak any filthy words. Q. 54. What is your duty to your parents and governors? A. I must reverence and obey them in the Lord; I must thankfully receive their instructions, and submit to their rebukes, and labour in every thing to be a comfort to them. Q. 55. What is your duty to the poor? A. I must pity, help, and relieve them, according to my ability,

Q. 56. What is your duty to all men? A. I must render to all their dues; I must be honest and just in all my dealings; I must be respectful to my friends, and forgive my enemies, and speak evil of no man. Q. 57. How are you able to perform this duty? A. Not in any strength of my own, but in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ, which I must ask of God for his sake. Q. 58. What must you do when you find you come short of this duty? A. I must renew my repentance, and pray to God for pardon in the blood of Christ, and be careful to do my duty better for the time to come. Q. 59. What encouragement have you thus to live in the fear of God? A. If I do so, I shall certainly be happy both in this world, and in that to come.

## PART V.

### *Concerning the Future State.*

Q. 60. WHAT will become of you shortly? A. I must shortly die, and leave this world. Q. 61. What becomes of the body at death? A. It returns to the earth, to be raised to life again at the day of judgment. Q. 62. What becomes of the soul then? A. It returns to God who gave it, to be determined to an unchangeable state, according to what was done in the body. Q. 63. What shall be the portion of the wicked and ungodly in the other world? A. They shall all go to hell. Q. 64. What is hell? A. It is a state of everlasting misery and torment, in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Q. 65. What shall be the portion of the godly in the other world? A. They shall all go to heaven. Q. 66. What is heaven? A. It is a state of everlasting rest and joy with God and Jesus Christ. Q. 67. What life then will you resolve to live in this world? A. God's grace enabling me, I will live a holy, godly life, and make it my great care and business to serve God, and save my soul.

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## A SHORT CATECHISM

FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THOSE WHO ARE TO BE ADMITTED TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Q. 1. WHAT is the Lord's supper? A. It is a sacrament of the New Testament. Q. 2. Who ordained this sacrament? A. Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein he was betrayed. Q. 3. What are the outward signs in this sacrament? A. Giving and receiving bread and wine, and eating and drinking of them in a solemn and religious manner. Q. 4. What does the bread broken signify and represent to us? A. The broken body of our Lord Jesus, which was crucified for us. Q. 5. What does the wine signify? A. The precious blood of Christ, which was shed for us upon the cross. Q. 6. What does the minister's giving the bread and wine signify? A. The gracious offer that is made us in the gospel, of Christ and all his benefits, upon the terms of faith, and repentance, and new obedience. Q. 7. What does the receiving of the bread and wine signify? A. Our hearty acceptance of Christ as he is offered to us in the gospel, and our compliance with the terms of that offer. Q. 8. What does the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine signify? A. The satisfaction we take in Christ and his gospel, and the nourishment of our souls thereby through faith. Q. 9. Why did Christ ordain this sacrament? A. To be a memorial of his death till he come; for he said, *Do this in remembrance of me.* Q. 10. What more is there in this sacrament? A. It is a seal of the covenant of grace, strongly assuring us, that God is willing in Christ to be to us a God, and strongly engaging us to be to him a people. Q. 11. Why would you be admitted to this solemn ordinance? A. Because I desire to take the covenant of my baptism upon myself, and to make it my own act and deed, to join myself unto the Lord. Q. 12. What do you think of that covenant which is there sealed? A. I think it is well ordered in all things, and sure; and I do heartily consent to it, and venture my soul and my salvation upon it. Q. 13. What do you think of Christ, who is there set before you? A. I think he is a gracious and all-sufficient Saviour, and I accept of him as my Lord and my God. Q. 14. What do you think of sin? A. I think sin to be the worst of evils; and I do heartily repent of my own sin, and turn from it to God. Q. 15. What do you think of this world? A. I think it is vanity and vexation of spirit, and I will never set my heart upon it. Q. 16. What do you think of the other world? A. I think the things of another world are real, and great, and very near, and I would therefore give all diligence to prepare for that world. Q. 17. What do you think of a religious life? A. I think that a holy, heavenly life, spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, is the most pleasant and comfortable life a man can live in this world. Q. 18. Will you then live such a life? A. By the grace of God, I will, and with purpose of heart will cleave to the Lord. Q. 19. What communion do you desire to have with the church of Christ? A. By faith, hope, and love, I desire to maintain a spiritual communion with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Q. 20. What must you do in your preparation for the Lord's Supper? A. I must examine myself. Q. 21. How must you examine yourself about your spiritual state? A. I must seriously inquire whether I do in sincerity consent to the covenant of grace, and whether I be indeed born again. Q. 22. What will be an evidence, that your spiritual state is bad?

A. If I live a vain and careless life, loving the world more than God, and minding the things of the flesh more than the things of the Spirit, and allowing myself in any known sin, I have reason to conclude, that whatever profession I make, my spiritual state is bad. Q. 23. What will be an evidence that your spiritual state is good? A. If I be heartily concerned about my soul and eternity, and carefully seek the favour of God through Christ; if I strive against sin, make conscience of my words and ways, and have respect to all God's commandments, I have reason to hope, that notwithstanding my daily infirmities, my spiritual state is good. Q. 24. How must you examine your conscience about your particular actions? A. I must solemnly reflect upon what I have done amiss in thought, word, and deed, and I must humbly confess it before God, and judge myself for it. Q. 25. What else must you do in your preparation for the Lord's supper? A. I must earnestly pray to God for his Spirit and grace; I must meditate much upon the love of Christ in dying for me; and I must be in charity with all men. Q. 26. After what manner must you receive the sacrament? A. With humble reverence and seriousness; with sorrow for sin, and hatred of it; with faith in Christ, and the lively workings of pious and devout affection towards him. Q. 27. What must you do after you have received this sacrament? A. I must walk cheerfully with God in all holy conversation, and never return again to folly. Q. 28. Who are they that receive this sacrament unworthily? A. They who continue in love and league with sin while they pretend to covenant with God. Q. 29. What is the misery of those who do so? A. They eat and drink judgment to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body. Q. 30. Who shall be welcome to this ordinance? A. They who by faith cordially consent to the covenant of grace, and do honour to their Redeemer, by showing forth his death. Q. 31. What benefits do they receive by it that duly improve it? A. Their faith is hereby strengthened, their resolutions are confirmed, their comforts are increased, and they have an earnest of the everlasting feast.

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A

# SCRIPTURE CATECHISM,

IN THE

# METHOD OF THE ASSEMBLY'S.

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## Introduction.

We are very happy (I know) in catechisms, which, to the inhabitants of this *valley of vision*, will be either the means of knowledge, or the shame of ignorance. The variety of these forms of sound words, while they all speak for substance the same thing, and are all built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, derogates not at all from the honour of the Christian doctrine, but rather (like the setting up of several candles in the same room) help to diffuse the light, and make it stronger. Many very excellent expositions we have both of the *Church Catechism* and of the *Assembly's*, and an ancient and profitable one of Mr. Ball's; and yet some encourage me to hope, that this *essay*, which is in a way not hitherto used, that I know of, will be found not altogether useless. Two things I aim at in it: one is, to put the catechism into such a dress, as to make it (if possible) both easy and copious, so as that it may not be an insuperable task to the learner, and yet may furnish him with plenty of useful knowledge. The bulk of it (which somewhat exceeds my first intentions) shows it to be copious; and yet I think it is made very easy, by breaking of it into so many short questions, and those answered by Yes or No, which the learner may at first content himself with, the teacher, if he pleases, reading the proofs; and, by degrees, the learner, who is willing to take

a little pains, and begins to be versed in the Scriptures, will find it no great difficulty to charge his memory with most of the proofs annexed, which the question oftentimes easily introduces, and which, by frequent use, will in time become familiar. I remember to have seen an *Explanation of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism*, (and I think it was the first that ever was published,) by a great man, the Rev. Dr. Wallis, of Oxford, which was done by breaking the propositions of the catechism in short questions, answered (as this) with Yes or No. That performance, though very short, was an excellent precedent, directing to a method of catechising, which has been of good use to enrich the understanding of the learners, without overloading their memories. The text subjoined here will show that our Yea is yea, and our Nay, nay. To make this the more easy, the several sections under each article may be allotted to several catechumens.

But another thing I aim at, (and indeed the chief,) is to promote the knowledge of the Scriptures. Divine truths, methinks, sound best in divine language; and the *things which God has revealed to us by his Spirit*, cannot be conveyed in a more safe and proper vehicle, than by the words which the Holy Ghost teaches, (1 Cor. ii. 10, 13.) which, though I would be far from superstitiously tying myself or others to, yet, I confess, I cannot but think they should be preferred. I have often observed how the evangelist rectifies a mistake which rose upon a saying of Christ's, only by repeating the words spoken, John xxi. 23. *He said not, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* He said so, and no more; add thou not to his words. We are directed not only to think, but to *speak, according to his word*, Isa. viii. 20.

It is especially profitable to acquaint children betimes with their Bibles, and to show them their religion there. *Timothy's catechism* was the Scripture, which he knew απο βρεφους—*from his very infancy*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. They who are ready and mighty in the Scriptures, will be thoroughly furnished for every good work, and thoroughly fortified against every evil work. What I have here endeavoured, may (I hope) prove a good expedient for this purpose, obliging myself to produce a text of Scripture for every question, it cannot be thought they should be alike apposite. Perhaps here and there one may be found that is *diverted* from its *primary* intention by an allusion only, (which I think is warranted by divers of the New-Testament quotations out of the Old,) yet I hope there are none *perverted*. Were we more conversant with the inspired writings, we should (as one of the ancients speaks) "adore the fulness of the Scriptures." I have quoted the texts as concisely as I could, in hopes the diligent reader, who searches the Scripture daily, will be stirred up to look further into the places referred to, which he will often find very well worth his while. To that end, I have throughout added the book, chapter, and verse; which yet it is needless for them who learn by heart to trouble themselves with.

To the service of such ministers, governors of families, and other Christians, as shall see cause to make use of such a help, with an entire dependence upon the grace and blessing of God, for the acceptableness and usefulness of it, this small oblation is humbly tendered, by one who is earnestly desirous to increase in Scripture knowledge, and ambitious of the honour of being any way instrumental to propagate it.

MATTH. HENRY.

### POSTSCRIPT TO THE THIRD EDITION.

I am willing to take this opportunity to advise one thing more concerning the use of this catechism, which I have found very beneficial, *viz.* That the learners be put in their answers to turn the question into a proposition, which they will easily do with a little direction. Example,—Is man a reasonable creature? Yes: man is a reasonable creature; for there is a spirit in man, &c. And this will lead them, when the question gives occasion for it, to make application to themselves. Again, Is your business in the world to serve the flesh? No: it is not *my* business in the world to serve the flesh; for we are not debtors to the flesh.

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A

## SCRIPTURE CATECHISM.

Q. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever.

1. Is man a reasonable creature? Yes: for there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding, Job xxxii. 8. Has he greater capacities than the brutes? Yes: for God teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven, Job xxxv. 11.

2. Is man his own maker? No: it is God that hath made us, and not we ourselves, Ps. c. 3. Is he then his own master? No: there is a Lord over us, Ps. xii. 4. Is he his own carver? No: should it be according to thy mind, Job xxxiv. 33. Is he his own end? No: for none of us lives to himself, or dies to himself, Rom. xiv. 7.

3. Is it your business in the world to serve the flesh? No: for we are not debtors to the flesh, that we should live after the flesh, Rom. viii. 12. Is it to pursue the world? No: for we are not of the world, John xvii. 16.

4. Is your happiness bound up in the creature?

No: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit, Eccl. i. 14. Will the riches of the world make you happy? No: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth, Luke xii. 15. Will the praise and applause of men make you happy? No: for it is vain-glory, Gal. v. 26. Will sport and pleasure make you happy? No: for the wise man said of laughter, It is mad, and of mirth, What doth it? Eccl. ii. 2. Can the gain of the world make you happy? No: for what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Matt. xvi. 26.

5. Is God then your chief end? Yes: for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, Rom. xi. 36. Were you made for him? Yes: this people have I formed for myself, Isa. xliii. 21. Were you redeemed for him? Yes: ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

6. Is it your chief business to glorify God? Yes: we must glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Must this be ultimately designed in all our actions? Yes: do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31. Is God glorified by our praises? Yes: he that offers praise, glorifies me, Ps. l. 23. And is he glorified by our works? Yes: herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, John xv. 8.

7. Is God your chief good? Yes: for happy is the people whose God is the Lord, Ps. cxliv. 15. Does all good come from him? Yes: for with him is the fountain of life, Ps. xxxvi. 9. And is all good enjoyed in him? Yes: the Lord is the portion of my inheritance, and of my cup, Ps. xvi. 5.

8. Is it your chief happiness then to have God's favour? Yes: for in his favour is life, Ps. xxx. 5. Is that the most desirable good? Yes: for his loving-kindness is better than life, Ps. lxiii. 3. Do you desire it above any good? Yes: Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, Ps. iv. 6, 7. And should you give all diligence to make it sure? Yes: herein we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 9.

9. Is communion with God in grace here the best pleasure? Yes: it is good for me to draw near to God, Ps. lxxiii. 28. Is the vision and fruition of God in glory hereafter the best portion? Yes: for in his presence there is fulness of joy, Ps. xvi. 11. Will you therefore set your heart upon this chief good? Yes: Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee; when my flesh and my heart fail, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26.

Q. 2. *What rule has God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

A. The word of God (which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament) is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

1. Do we need a rule to direct us to our chief end? Yes: for we all like sheep have gone astray, Isa. liii. 6. Could we not find it out of ourselves? No: for man is born like the wild ass's colt, Job xi. 12.

2. Is divine revelation necessary to religion? Yes: for faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, Rom. x. 17. Is not the light of nature sufficient without it? No: for the world by wisdom knew not God, 1 Cor. i. 21. Has God therefore given us a revelation? Yes: he hath showed thee, O man, what is good, Mic. vi. 3. Was there revelation from the beginning? Yes: at sundry times, and in divers manners, God spake unto the fathers, Heb. i. 1.

3. Are the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament the word of God, and a divine revelation? Yes: for all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, 2 Tim. iii. 16. Were they indited by the blessed Spirit? Yes: for holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21. Were they confirmed by miracles? Yes: God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, Heb. ii. 4. Do they recommend themselves? Yes: for the word of God is quick and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. Is not the Bible then a cheat put upon the world? No: for these are not the words of him that hath a devil, John x. 21.

4. Was the book of the Scripture written for our use? Yes: whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, Rom. xv. 4. And is it of great use? Yes: for it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 2 Tim. iii. 16.

5. Are the Scriptures the great support of our religion? Yes: for we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Eph. ii. 20. Are they the standing rule of our faith and practice? Yes: we must have recourse to the law and to the testimony, Isa. viii. 20. Are they the only rule? Yes: for other foundation can no man lay, 1 Cor. iii. 11. Are they our guide? Yes: for the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, Prov. vi. 23. Do they show us the way to heaven and happiness? Yes: for in them we think we have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ, John v. 39.

6. Are the Scriptures our oracle which we must consult? Yes: What is written in the law, how readest thou? Luke x. 26. Are they our touchstone which we must try by? Yes: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them, Isa. viii. 20. Are they the weapons of our spiritual warfare? Yes: Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Matt. iv. 10. Eph. vi. 17.

7. Is the written word a sufficient rule? Yes: for the law of the Lord is perfect, Ps. xix. 7. Is it plain

Yes: for the word is nigh thee, Rom. x. 8. Is the church's authority the rule of our faith? No: for our faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, 1 Cor. ii. 5. May we depend upon unwritten traditions? No: for we must refuse profane and old wives' fables, 1 Tim. iv. 7.

8. Will the written word be the rule of our judgment hereafter? Yes: for we must be judged by the law of liberty, Jam. ii. 12. Ought we therefore to be ruled by it now? Yes: as many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be on them, Gal. vi. 16. And to be comforted by it? Yes: for through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we have hope, Rom. xv. 4.

9. Are the Scriptures to be translated into vulgar tongues? Yes: for we should hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God, Acts ii. 11. And must we study them? Yes: Search the Scriptures, John v. 39. And labour to understand them? Yes: Understandest thou what thou readest? Acts viii. 30. And must we rest satisfied with this revelation of God's will? Yes: for if we believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would we be persuaded though one rose from the dead, Luke xvi. 31. Is it a great affront to God to neglect his word? Yes: I have written unto them the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing, Hos. viii. 12.

10. Must little children get the knowledge of the Scripture? Yes: Timothy is commended for this, that from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And must their parents instruct them therein? Yes: they must teach them diligently unto their children, and talk of them, Deut. vi. 7.

11. Must we all love the word of God? Yes: O how love I thy law! And must we meditate therein? Yes: It is my meditation all the day, Ps. cxix. 97. And will this be to our own advantage? Yes: for it is able to make us wise to salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15.

Q. 3. *What do the Scriptures principally teach?*

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

1. Is it necessary that we have a faith concerning God? Yes: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Heb. xi. 6. Can we have that faith without being taught? No: for how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? Rom. x. 14. And have they not heard? Yes: verily their sound went into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world, Rom. x. 18.

2. Is not the knowledge of God a great privilege? Yes: for this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, John xvii. 3. Is it not the best knowledge? Yes: for the knowledge of the Holy is understanding, Prov. ix. 10. Does the Scripture teach us that knowledge? Yes: for if we receive those words, and hide those commandments with us, then shall we understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, Prov. ii. 1, 5.

3. Do not the works of creation prove that there is a God? Yes: for we understand by the things that are made his eternal power and godhead, Rom. i. 20. And do not the works of providence prove it? Yes: for verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth, Ps. lviii. 11. But do not the Scriptures tell us best what God is? Yes: for no man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him, John i. 18.

4. Are we all concerned to get the knowledge of God? Yes: we should all know him, from the least even to the greatest, Heb. viii. 11. Must children get that knowledge? Yes: I write unto you little children because you have known the Father, 1 John ii. 13. And must we all grow in that knowledge? Yes: we must follow on to know the Lord, Hos. vi. 3.

5. Are we to believe what the Scripture reveals concerning God? Yes: for these things are written that we may believe, John xx. 31. And must we believe all that the Scripture reveals? Yes: Believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets, Acts xxiv. 14. Must we believe that which is not revealed? No: for the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. ii. 11.

6. Does God require duty of man? Yes: for unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding, Job xxviii. 28. Is it enough to believe the truth revealed, if we do not the duty that is required? No: for faith without works is dead, James ii. 26. Is it enough to do the duty required, though we do not believe the truth revealed? No: for he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, 1 John v. 10.

7. Does the Scripture teach us what duty God requires? Yes: He has showed thee what the Lord thy God requires of thee, Mic. vi. 8. And must we do the duty that the Scripture teaches? Yes: we must observe to do according to all that is written therein, and not turn from it to the right hand, or to the left, Josh. i. 7. Must this obedience always accompany faith? Yes: for they which have believed in God must be careful to maintain good works, Tit. iii. 8.

Q. 4. *What is God?*

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

1. Is God a Spirit? Yes: for Christ himself has said, God is a Spirit, John iv. 24. Is he a pure Spirit? Yes: for God is light, and with him is no darkness at all, 1 John i. 5. Has he a body as we

have? No: Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as a man seeth? Job x. 4. Can he be seen with bodily eyes? No: for he is one whom no man hath seen, or can see, 1 Tim. vi. 16. Are not the angels spirits? Yes: he maketh his angels spirits, Ps. civ. 4. Are not the souls of men spirits? Yes: for he formeth the spirit of man within him, Zech. xii. 1. But is God a Spirit like unto them? No: for he is the Father of spirits, Heb. xii. 9.

2. Is God infinite? Yes: for we cannot by searching find out God, Job xi. 7. Is he contained in any place? No: for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, 1 Kings viii. 27. Is he every where present? Yes: for whither can we go from his Spirit, or flee from his presence? Ps. cxxxix. 7. Can any hide himself in secret places that God shall not see him? No: for do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord, Jer. xxiii. 24.

3. Is God eternal? Yes: from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God, Ps. xc. 2. Had he beginning of days? No: for he is the Ancient of days, Dan. vii. 9. Shall there be any end of his life? No: for he is the same, and his years have no end, Ps. cii. 27. Is there with him any succession of time? No: for his days are not as the days of man, Job x. 5. Can he die? No: he is the only potentate, that hath immortality, 1 Tim. vi. 16.

4. Is God unchangeable? Yes: for he is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of turning, Jam. i. 17. Is there any decay of his perfections? No: for he fainteth not, neither is weary, Isa. xl. 28. Is there any alteration in his counsels? No: for he is not a man that he should repent, 1 Sam. xv. 29. Is it well for us that he is unchangeable? Yes: I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed, Mal. iii. 6.

5. Is God infinite in his being? Yes: for he has said, I AM THAT I AM, Exod. iii. 14. Is he self-existent? Yes: for the Father hath life in himself, John v. 26. Is he the best of beings? Yes: for who is a God like unto him? Exod. xv. 11. Is he the first of causes? Yes: for he is the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, 1 Cor. viii. 6. Is he the highest of powers? Yes: for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, 1 Tim. vi. 15.

6. Is he a God of perfect knowledge? Yes: for his understanding is infinite, Ps. cxlvii. 5. Can any thing be hid from him? No: for all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do, Heb. iv. 13. Does he know things to come? Yes: for he declareth the end from the beginning, Isa. xlvi. 10. Does he know our hearts? Yes: for he understandeth our thoughts afar off, Ps. cxxxix. 2. Does he know all our actions? Yes: for his eyes are upon the ways of man, Job xxxiv. 21.

7. Is God infinitely wise? Yes: for wisdom and might are his, Dan. ii. 20. Are all his works wisely done? Yes: in wisdom he hath made them all, Ps. civ. 24. And particularly the work of redemption? Yes: for it is the wisdom of God in a mystery, 1 Cor. ii. 7. Can the wisdom of God's counsels be fathomed? No: O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Rom. xi. 33.

8. Is he a God of power? Yes: God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God, Ps. lxii. 11. Is he Almighty? Yes: he is the Lord God Almighty, Rev. xv. 3. Is his power irresistible? Yes: for none can stay his hand, Dan. iv. 35. Is his sovereignty incontestable? Yes: for he giveth not account of any of his matters, Job xxxiii. 13. Is any thing too hard for him? No: for with God all things are possible, Matt. xix. 26.

9. Is he a God of perfect holiness? Yes: for holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, Isa. vi. 3. Is there iniquity with God? No: he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, Heb. i. 13. Is this his glory? Yes: for he is glorious in holiness, Exod. xv. 11. And must we give him the glory of it? Yes: give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness, Ps. xxx. 4. And must we study herein to resemble him? Yes: Be ye holy, for I am holy, 1 Pet. i. 16.

10. Is he a just and righteous Governor? Yes: the Lord is righteous in all his ways, Ps. cxlv. 17. Did he ever do wrong to any of his creatures? No: there is no unrighteousness in him, Ps. xcii. 15. And does justice please him? Yes: the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, Ps. xi. 7.

11. Is he a merciful God? Yes: he is the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, Exod. xxxiv. 6. And a good God? Yes: thou art good, and dost good, Ps. cxix. 68. Is he universally good? Yes: for he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, Ps. cxlv. 9. Is he in a special manner good to his own people? Yes: for truly God is good to Israel, Ps. lxxiii. 1. And should we acquaint ourselves with his goodness? Yes: O taste, and see that the Lord is good, Ps. xxxiv. 8.

12. Is he a God of truth? Yes: the truth of the Lord endures for ever, Ps. cxvii. 2. Will he perform all his promises? Yes: for he is faithful that hath promised, Heb. x. 23. Is there any danger of his deceiving us? No: it is impossible for God to lie, Heb. vi. 18.

13. Is this a complete description of God? No: for, lo, these are but parts of his ways; and how little a portion is heard of him! Job xxvi. 14. Must we therefore always speak of God with reverence? Yes: for behold God is great, and we know him not, Job xxxvi. 26. And must we pray to him to teach us what we shall say? Yes: for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness, Job xxxvii. 19.

Q. 5. *Are there more gods than one.*

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

1. Are there many gods? No: for though there be that are called gods, yet there is but one God, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. Can there be but one? No: for he has said, I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Isa. xlvi. 9. Are you sure there is but one? Yes: for the Lord our God is one Lord, and there is none other but he, Mark xii. 29, 32.

2. Is the God whom we serve that one God? Yes: for Jehovah he is God, Jehovah he is God, 1 Kings xviii. 39. Is he infinitely above all pretenders? Yes: for he is a great King above all gods, Ps. xcv. 3. Is he God alone? Yes: O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, thou art the God, even thou alone, Isa. xxxvii. 16. Are all other gods false gods? Yes: for all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens, Ps. xcvi. 5.

3. Is our God the true God? Yes: the Lord he is the true God, Jer. x. 10. Is he the only true God? Yes: this is life eternal, to know the only true God, John xvii. 3. Is he the living God? Yes: the living God, and an everlasting King, Jer. x. 10. Is he the Sovereign Lord? Yes: for he is God over all, blessed for evermore, Rom. ix. 5. Is this one God enough? Yes: for he is God All-sufficient, Gen. xvii. 1.

4. Is the Lord Jehovah the maker of all things? Yes: he is the everlasting God, even the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, Isa. xl. 28. Is he your Maker? Yes: he is the Lord our Maker, Ps. xcv. 6. Is he the owner of all things? Yes; for he is the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, Gen. xiv. 19. Is he your rightful owner? Yes: we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand, Ps. xcv. 7. Is he the ruler of all things? Yes: for his kingdom ruleth over all, Ps. ciii. 19. Is he your ruler? Yes: O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, Ps. cxvi. 16. Is he the benefactor of all the creatures? Yes: for he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, Acts xvii. 25. Is he your benefactor? Yes: for he daily loadeth us with his benefits, Ps. lxviii. 19. Shall he therefore be yours by your own consent? Yes: O God, thou art my God, Ps. lxiii. 1.

Q. 6. *How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God; the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

1. Are there three gods? No: for the Lord is one, and his name one, Zech. xiv. 9. Is there more than one person in the Godhead? Yes: for God said, Let *us* make man, Gen. i. 26. Are there distinct persons in the Godhead? Yes: for he who is the brightness of his Father's glory, is the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. Are there three persons in the Godhead? Yes: for there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, 1 John v. 7.

2. Is the Father God? Yes: for there is one God and Father of all, Eph. iv. 6. Is Jesus Christ the Word? Yes: his name is called the Word of God, Rev. xix. 13. Is the Word God? Yes: for in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, John i. 1. Is the Holy Ghost a divine person? Yes: for the Spirit searcheth all things, 1 Cor. ii. 10.

3. Is it the personal property of the Father to beget the Son? Yes: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Ps. ii. 7. Is it the personal property of the Son to be begotten of the Father? Yes: for he is the only-begotten of the Father, John i. 14. Is it the personal property of the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son? Yes: for Christ says, I will send you the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, John xv. 26.

4. Are these three one God? Yes: for it is said expressly, these three are one, 1 John v. 7. Are they the same in substance, and equal in power and glory? Yes: for Christ says, I and my Father are one, John x. 30. Can this doctrine be measured by reason? No: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it to us, Matt. xvi. 17. But ought we to believe it? Yes: for we are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Matt. xxviii. 19. and we are blessed with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And ought we to improve it? Yes: that we all may be one, as the Father is in Christ, and he in the Father, that we also may be one in them, John xvii. 21.

Q. 7. *What are the decrees of God?*

A. The decrees of God are his eternal purposes, according to the counsel of his own will: whereby for his own glory he hath fore-ordained whatever comes to pass.

1. Does God dispose of all things that come to pass? Yes: My times are in thy hand, Ps. xxxi. 15. Does he do it according to his own will: Yes: for he hath done whatsoever he pleased, Ps. cxv. 2. Can any control his will? No: for he doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, Dan. iv. 35. Has he determined before what he will do? Yes: for known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world, Acts xv. 18.

2. Is there a counsel then in all the will of God? Yes: for he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, Eph. i. 11. Is it an eternal counsel? Yes: for it was ordained before the world, 1 Cor.

ii. 7. Is it free? Yes: Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight, Matt. xi. 26. Is it unchangeable? Yes: the counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, Ps. xxxiii. 11. Is it for his own glory? Yes: that we should be to the praise of his glory, Eph. i. 12.

Were all the events of time ordained from eternity? Yes: He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, Job xxiii. 14. Does any thing come to pass by chance? No: for the lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord, Prov. xvi. 33. Does every thing come to pass as God has ordained it? Yes: for there are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand, Prov. xix. 21.

4. Can we search out God's counsels? No: for his judgments are a great deep, Ps. xxxvi. 6. Ought we not therefore to acquiesce in them? Yes: Here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him, 2 Sam. xv. 26. May we question God's proceedings? No: for his thoughts are above our thoughts, Isa. lv. 9.

Q. 8. *How does God execute his decrees?*

A. God executes his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

1. Shall all God's decrees be executed? Yes: for the Lord of hosts hath sworn, surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass, Isa. xiv. 24. Can any of them be defeated? No: for the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? Isa. xiv. 27. Did God execute his decree in the work of creation? Yes: he hath created all things, and for his pleasure they are and were created, Rev. iv. 11. And does he execute his decrees in the works of Providence? Yes: for out of the mouth of the Most High both evil and good proceed, Lam. iii. 38.

2. Did God begin to work in the creation of the world? Yes: Thou, Lord, in the beginning didst lay the foundations of the earth, Heb. i. 10. Is he still working? Yes: for Christ says, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work, John v. 17. Are all his works copied out of his counsels? Yes: for they are what his hand and his counsel determine before to be done, Acts iv. 28.

3. Are God's works many? Yes: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! Ps. civ. 24. Are they great? Yes: his work is honourable and glorious, Ps. cxi. 3. Are they perfect in their kind? Yes: God is the Rock, his work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4. Can they be amended? No: whatsoever God doth, nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it, Eccl. iii. 14. Ought they to be studied? Yes: They are sought out of all them that have pleasure therein, Ps. cxi. 2. Is it a great sin to neglect them? Yes: because they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up, Ps. xxviii. 5.

4. Can all God's works be thoroughly discovered? No: for no man can find out the work that God makes from the beginning to the end, Eccl. iii. 11. Can his designs in them be accounted for? No: for his way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, Ps. lxxvii. 19. But is he glorified in them? Yes: all his works do praise him, Ps. cxlv. 10.

Q. 9. *What is the work of creation?*

A. The work of creation is God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

1. Did God create the world? Yes: in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, Gen. i. 1. Did he create every thing in the world? Yes: for without him was not any thing made that was made, John i. 3. John xii. 7—9. Did he create the world by his word? Yes: for through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, Heb. xi. 3. Did all things come into being by that word? Yes: for by the word of God the heavens were of old, 2 Pet. iii. 5. And are they thereby preserved in being? Yes: by the same word they are kept in store, *v.* 7. Did God find any difficulty in making the world? No: for he spake and it was done; he said, Let there be light, and there was light, Ps. xxxiii. 9. Gen. i. 3. Did he need assistance in it? No: for he stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the earth by himself, Isa. xliv. 24.

2. Did he make all out of nothing? Yes: for the things which are seen were not made of the things which do appear, Heb. xi. 13. Did he bring light out of darkness? Yes: for God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, 2 Cor. iv. 6. And order out of confusion? Yes: for the earth was without form and void, Gen. i. 2. Did he make all in six days? Yes: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, Exod. xx. 11. Did God make all well? Yes: God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good, Gen. i. 31. Did he make all firm? Yes: he hath made a decree which shall not pass, Ps. cxlviii. 6. And all for himself? Yes: the Lord has made all things for himself, Prov. xvi. 4.

3. Did God make all things by Jesus Christ? Yes: for by him also he made the worlds, Heb. i. 2. and created all things by Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 9. Col. i. 16. John i. iii. Did God manifest his own perfections in the work of creation? Yes: for the heavens declare the glory of God, Ps. xix. 1. Must we give him the glory of this work? Yes: we must worship him that made the heaven and the earth, Rev. xiv. 7. Must we give him thanks for his creatures? Yes: every creature of God is good, and to be received with thanksgiving, 1 Tim. iv. 4. May we be encouraged by the work of creation to trust in God? Yes: My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth, Ps. cxxi. 2.

4. Did God create the angels? Yes: He maketh his angels spirits, Heb. i. 7. Are they attendants upon him? Yes: thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him, Dan. vii. 10. Are they employed for the good of the saints? Yes: they are sent forth to minister for them which shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14. Have true believers communion with them in faith, hope, and love? Yes: for we are come to an innumerable company of angels, Heb. xii. 22.

5. Did all the angels continue in their integrity? No: There were angels that left their first state, Jude 6. Is it probable that they who fell, fell by pride? Yes: for they that are lifted up with pride, fall into the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6. Were they punished for their sin? Yes: God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, 2 Pet. ii. 4.

Q. 10. *How did God create man?*

A. God created man male and female, after his image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

1. Is man God's creature? Yes: for we are also his offspring, Acts xvii. 28. Were our first parents the work of his hands? Yes: male and female created he them, and called their name Adam, Gen. v. 2. Was man made with a consultation? Yes: for God said, Let us make man, Gen. i. 26. Do all the children of men descend from Adam and Eve? Yes: for God has made of one blood all nations of men, Acts xvii. 26.

2. Was man's body at first made out of the earth? Yes: God made man of the dust of the ground, Gen. ii. 7. And are our bodies of the earth earthy? Yes: for I also am formed out of the clay, Job xxxiii. 6. But are they not curiously wrought? Yes: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, Ps. cxxxix. 14. Is God the former of our bodies? Yes: Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and fenced me with bones and sinews, Job x. 11. Is he the author of our senses? Yes: the hearing ear, and seeing eye, the Lord has made, even both of them, Prov. xx. 12.

3. Is God the Father of our spirits? Yes: for he breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, Gen. ii. 7. Has God given each of us a soul? Yes: The Lord liveth that made us this soul, Jer. xxxviii. 16. Is it a rational soul? Yes: for the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord, Prov. xx. 27. Is it immortal? Yes: for the spirit of a man goes upward, Eccl. iii. 21. Does it die with the body? No: for when the dust returns to the earth as it was, the Spirit returns to God who gave it, Eccl. xii. 7. Is God then the Sovereign of the heart? Yes: for he has said, Behold, all souls are mine, Ezek. xviii. 4. Must we therefore commit our souls to him? Yes: Into thine hand I commit my spirit, Ps. xxxi. 5.

4. Was man made after God's image? Yes: God created man in his own image, Gen. i. 27. Did that image consist in knowledge? Yes: for we are renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created us, Col. iii. 10. Did it consist in righteousness and true holiness? Yes: for the new man after God is created in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Was there in man at first a perfect purity and freedom from sin? Yes: Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, Ezek. xxviii. 15. compare xvi. 13. Was there in him a perfect rectitude and disposition to good? Yes: for God made man upright, Eccl. vii. 29. Are there some remains of God's image still upon man? Yes: for men are made after the similitude of God, Jam. iii. 9. Was man made with a dominion over the creatures? Yes: for thou hast put all things under his feet, Ps. viii. 6. Have we not reason to admire God's favour to man? Yes: Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? Ps. cxliv. 3.

Q. 11. *What are God's works of providence?*

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

1. When God had made the world, did he leave it to itself? No: for he upholdeth all things by the word of his power, Heb. i. 3. Does he see to the whole creation? Yes: for the eyes of the Lord are in every place, Prov. xv. 3. Does he condescend to take notice of his creatures? Yes: he humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth, Ps. cxiii. 6. Is any thing at a distance from him? No: for he is not far from every one of us, Acts xvii. 27. Does he look on as one unconcerned? No: for his eyes behold, and his eyelids try, the children of men, Ps. xi. 4.

2. Does God look after the world of angels? Yes: for he maketh peace in his high places, Job xxv. 2. Does he look after this lower world? Yes: for the eyes of all wait upon him, Ps. cxlv. 15. Does he take care of the fowls? Yes: our heavenly Father feedeth them, Matt. vi. 26. What! even the sparrows? Yes: not one of them shall fall to the ground without our Father, Matt. x. 29. What! and the ravens? Yes: he feeds the young ravens which cry, Ps. cxlvii. 9. Is he the Protector and Benefactor of all the creatures? Yes: Thou preservest them all, Neh. ix. 6. Is he man's Protector and Benefactor? Yes: for in him we live, and move, and have our being, Acts xvii. 28. Do we depend upon God for the support of our life? Yes: for he holdeth our soul in life, Ps. lxvi. 9. And for the comforts of life? Yes: for he giveth us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness, Acts xiv. 17. And do we depend upon him for the safety of our life? Yes: he keepeth all our bones, Ps. xxxiv. 20. And for the con-

tinuance of life? Yes: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days, Deut. xxx. 20.

3. Does God govern all things? Yes: his kingdom ruleth over all, Ps. ciii. 19. Does he govern the holy angels? Yes: for they do his commandments, Ps. ciii. 20. Does he govern the heavenly bodies? Yes: the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, Judg. v. 20. Does he govern the power of the air? Yes: stormy winds fulfil his word, Ps. cxlviii. 8. Does he order what weather it shall be? Yes: for he saith to the snow, Be thou upon the earth, Job xxxvii. 6. And does he govern the inferior creatures? Yes: he spake, and locusts came, Ps. cv. 34. Can he command them? Yes: I have commanded the ravens to feed thee, 1 Kings xvii. 4. Can he control them? Yes: he shut the lions' mouths, Dan. vi. 22. Has he a sovereign dominion over the whole creation? Yes: for the Lord of hosts is his name, Isa. xlvii. 4.

4. Does God govern the children of men? Yes: the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, Dan. iv. 32. Does he govern kings? Yes: for the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, Prov. xxi. 1. And does he govern kingdoms? Yes: for he is the Governor among the nations, Ps. xxii. 28. And families too? Yes: for except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it, Ps. cxxvii. 1. Does he govern great men? Yes: for God is the judge, he puts down one, and sets up another, Ps. lxxv. 6, 7. And mean men too? Yes: for every man's judgment proceedeth from the Lord, Prov. xxix. 26. Can man make his own fortune? No: for the way of man is not in himself, neither is it in man that walketh, to direct his steps, Jer. x. 23. When man purposes, does God dispose? Yes: a man's heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps, Prov. xvi. 9. Do all comforts and crosses come from God's hand? Yes: for he has said, I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all these things, Isa. xlv. 7. Does God's providence extend itself to the smallest things? Yes: The very hairs of your head are all numbered, Matt. x. 30.

5. Is God's government holy? Yes: he is holy in all his works, Ps. cxlv. 17. Is it wise? Yes: he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, Isa. xxviii. 29. Is it powerful? Yes: for when he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble, Job xxxiv. 29. Is it rightful? Yes: God is greater than man, Job xxxiii. 12. Is it just? Yes: for shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Gen. xviii. 25. Does God sometimes reward and punish in this life? Yes: the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner, Prov. xi. 31. But does he always? No: for all things come alike to all, Eccl. ix. 1, 2.

6. Does God govern the world for the good of his church? Yes: for Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have called thee by thy name, Isa. xlv. 4. Is the government of the world committed to the Lord Jesus? Yes: for he is head over all things unto the church, Eph. i. 22. And is all ordered for God's glory? Yes: for the Lord alone shall be exalted, Isa. ii. 11. Is it a comfort to good men that God governs the world? Yes: The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice, Ps. xcvii. 1. Is it a terror to the wicked? Yes: The Lord reigns, let the people tremble, Ps. xcix. 1. Ought we to give him the praise of it? Yes: Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigns, Rev. xix. 6.

Q. 12. *What special act of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?*

A. When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience, forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

1. Did God make man happy as well as holy? Yes: for he put him into the garden of Eden, Gen. ii. 15. Did he provide comfortably for him? Yes: for he said, I will make him a help meet for him, Gen. ii. 18. Did he admit him into communion with himself? Yes: for he then blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, Gen. ii. 3. Was God well pleased in him? Yes: for his delights were with the sons of men, Prov. viii. 31.

2. Did God give him a law? Yes: the Lord God commanded the man, Gen. ii. 16. Did he give him a command of trial? Yes: Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it, Gen. ii. 17. Did he assure him of happiness, if he obeyed? Yes: for of every tree in the garden (even the tree of life) thou mayest freely eat, Gen. ii. 16. Did he threaten death upon his disobedience? Yes: for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die, Gen. ii. 17.

3. Was this God's covenant with Adam? Yes: for we read of those who, like Adam, transgressed the covenant, Hos. vi. 7. marg. Was, Do this and live, one branch of that covenant? Yes: for the man that doeth them, shall live in them, Gal. iii. 12. Was, Fail and die, the other branch of the covenant? Yes: the soul that sinneth, it shall die, Ezek. xviii. 4. Was this the covenant of innocency? Yes: for the law was not of faith, Gal. iii. 12. Was there a mediator of this covenant? No: for it is the better covenant that is established in the hands of a Mediator, Heb. viii. 6.

Q. 13. *Did our first parents continue in the state wherein they were first created?*

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the state wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

1. Is man now in the state wherein he was created? No: for God made man upright; but they

lave sought out many inventions, Eccl. vii. 29. Can we now say we are perfectly holy? No: If I say I am perfect, that shall prove me perverse, Job ix. 20. Can we say we are perfectly happy? No: for man is born to trouble, Job v. 7. Are we as we were then? No: man was planted a noble vine, but is turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine, Jer. ii. 21. Did man continue long in his state of innocence? No: For man being in honour abideth not, Ps. xlix. 12.

2. Did God leave man to the freedom of his own will? Yes: For if thou scornest, thou alone shall bear it, Prov. ix. 12. Did God draw Adam to sin? No: for God tempteth no man, James i. 13. Is he any way the Author of sin? No: far be it from God that he should do wickedness, Job xxxiv. 10. Did he do what was fit to be done to prevent it? Yes: What could have been done more to my vineyard? Isa. v. 4. Was he obliged to do more? No: for may he not do what he will with his own? Matt. xx. 15. Does all the blame of man's sin lie upon himself then? Yes: O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, Hos. xiii. 9.

3. Did man fall by sinning against God? Yes: Thou hast fallen by thine iniquity, Hos. xiv. 1. Was that the beginning of sin in this world? Yes: for by one man sin entered into the world, Rom. v. 12.

Q. 14. *What is sin?*

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

1. Is there a moral difference of good and evil? Yes: for we must cease to do evil, and learn to do well, Isa. i. 16, 17. Is it all alike then what we do? No: for God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccl. xii. 14. Is there such a thing as sin in thought? Yes: for the thought of foolishness is sin, Prov. xxiv. 9. May sin be committed in word too? Yes: for in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, Prov. x. 19.

2. Does sin suppose a law? Yes: for where there is no law, there is no transgression, Rom. iv. 15. and v. 13. Is sin the breach of a law? Yes: for sin is the transgression of the law, 1 John iii. 4. Is it God's law only that can make a thing to be sin? Yes: For against thee, thee only, have I sinned, Ps. li. 4. Is every breach of God's law sin? Yes: for all unrighteousness is sin, 1 John v. 17. Are we to judge of sin by the law? Yes: for by the law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. iii. 20. Could we discover sin without some law? No: For I had not known sin but by the law, Rom. vii. 7. Is the transgression of the law of nature sin? Yes: for they that have not the written law, show the work of the law written in their hearts, Rom. ii. 14, 15. But does the written law discover the root of sin? Yes: I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet, Rom. vii. 7.

3. Is ignorance of God sin? Yes: He shall take vengeance on them that know not God, 2 Thess. i. 8. Is disaffection to God's government sin? Yes: My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me, Ps. lxxxi. 11. Is all disobedience to God's law sin? Yes: For the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience, Col. iii. 6. Is it a sin to omit the good which God has commanded? Yes: for to him that knows to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin, Jam. iv. 17. Is it a sin to do it negligently? Yes: for if thou doest not well, sin lies at the door, Gen. iv. 7. Is it a sin to do the evil which God has forbidden? Yes: for he has said, O do not this abominable thing which I hate, Jer. xliv. 4. Is the inclination to evil sin? Yes: for St. Paul speaks of the sin that dwells in us, Rom. vii. 17.

4. Is sin the worst of evils? Yes: it is an evil thing, and a bitter, to forsake the Lord, Jer. ii. 19. Is the sinfulness of it the worst thing in it? Yes: for sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful, Rom. vii. 13. Is sin worse than affliction? Yes: for Moses by faith chose rather to suffer affliction than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, Heb. xi. 25. Is it displeasing to God? Yes: God is angry with the wicked every day, Ps. vii. 11. Is it destructive to ourselves? Yes: be sure your sin will find you out, Numb. xxxii. 23.

5. Ought we not therefore to take heed of sin? Yes: Stand in awe, and sin not, Ps. iv. 4. And of all appearances of it? Yes: abstain from all appearances of evil, 1 Thess. v. 22. And all approaches towards it? Yes: Touch not the unclean thing, 2 Cor. vi. 17. And must we hate it? Yes: Ye that love the Lord, hate evil, Ps. xcvii. 10. Must little children take heed of sin? Yes: My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not, 1 John ii. 1. Is it folly to make light of sin? Yes: fools make a mock at sin, Prov. xiv. 9. Will our observing the law of God be the best preservative against sin? Yes: Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee, Ps. cxix. 11. Will an eye to God be the best argument against sin? Yes: How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God, Gen. xxxix. 9.

Q. 15. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the state wherein they were created?*

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the state wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

1. Did our first parents eat the forbidden fruit? Yes: Thou hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it, Gen. iii. 17. Was their doing so disobedience? Yes: for it was by one man's disobedience that many were

made sinners, Rom. v. 19. Did the woman eat forbidden fruit first? Yes: the woman being deceived was in the transgression, 1 Tim. ii. 14. Did the serpent tempt her to it? Yes: the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, 2 Cor. xi. 3. Was that serpent the devil? Yes: The old serpent is the devil and Satan, Rev. xx. 2. Did he aim to make man as miserable as himself? Yes: he was a murderer from the beginning, John viii. 44.

2. Did the tempter teach them to question the command? Yes: he said to the woman, Hath God said ye shall not eat? Gen. iii. 1. Did he promise them safety in sin? Yes: he said, Ye shall not surely die, Gen. iii. 4. Did he promise them advantage by the sin? Yes: In the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, v. 5. Did he feed them with high thoughts of themselves? Yes: Ye shall be as gods, v. 5. Did he suggest to them hard thoughts of God? Yes: for he said, God doth know this, v. 5. Did Eve do well to parley with him? No: for we should cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge, Prov. xix. 27.

3. Did the devil prevail in the temptation? Yes: for she took of the fruit, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat, Gen. iii. 6. Was there in this sin the lust of the flesh? Yes: for she saw that the tree was good for food. Was there in it the lust of the eye? Yes: for she saw that it was pleasant to the eyes. And the pride of life? Yes: for she saw it was a tree to be desired to make one wise. Was unbelief of the word of God at the bottom of it? Yes: It is the evil heart of unbelief that departs from the living God, Heb. iii. 12. Was there in it an opposition to the divine law? Yes: for sin took occasion by the commandment, Rom. vii. 8. Was disobedience in a small matter a great provocation? Yes: for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is iniquity and idolatry, 1 Sam. xv. 23. If Adam fell thus, have we any reason to be secure? No: Wherefore let him that thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall, 1 Cor. x. 12.

Q. 16. *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression.

1. Are we concerned in our first parents' disobedience? Yes: for by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, Rom. v. 18. Were we in their loins when they ate the forbidden fruit? Yes: for Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living, Gen. iii. 20. Was Adam a common father? Yes: for he was to be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, Gen. i. 28. Was he a public person? Yes: for he was the figure of him that was to come, Rom. v. 14. Was the covenant made with him, and his posterity? Yes: for God always established his covenant with men, and with their seed after them, Gen. ix. 9.

2. Was Adam's sin our ruin then? Yes: for through the offence of one many are dead, Rom. v. 15. Was the honour of human nature thereby stained? Yes: for Adam begat a son in his own likeness, Gen. v. 3. Was the power of the human nature thereby weakened? Yes: for when we were without strength, Christ died for us, Rom. v. 6. Was the purity of it thereby corrupted? Yes: for in us, that is, in our flesh, there dwells no good thing, Rom. vii. 18. Was Adam himself degenerated? Yes: for God said to him, Dust thou art, Gen. iii. 19. And are we in like manner degenerated? Yes: for we have all borne the image of the earthy, 1 Cor. xv. 49.

3. Is this degeneracy universal? Yes: for all flesh hath corrupted his way, Gen. vi. 12. Did our Lord Jesus descend from Adam by ordinary generation? No: for he is the Lord from heaven, 1 Cor. xv. 47. Did he then sin in Adam? No: for he is undefiled, separate from sinners, Heb. vii. 26. Did all the rest of mankind sin in Adam? Yes: for how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Job xxv. 4. Are the ways of the Lord herein equal? Yes: but our ways are unequal, Ezek. xviii. 29.

Q. 17. *Into what state did the fall bring mankind?*

A. The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery.

1. Is mankind in a state of sin? Yes: for both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, Rom. iii. 9. Is a state of sin a sad state? Yes: for they that are in the flesh cannot please God, Rom. viii. 8. Did the fall bring us into a state of sin? Yes: for by it many were made sinners, Rom. v. 19. Does the world continue in that state? Yes: for the whole world lies in wickedness, 1 John v. 19. And are you by nature in that state? Yes: if I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me, Job ix. 20.

2. Is mankind in a state of misery? Yes: the misery of man is great upon him, Eccl. viii. 6. Is sin the cause of all that misery? Yes: for death entered by sin, and so death passed upon all men, Rom. v. 12. Is misery the consequence of sin? Yes: for evil pursues sinners, Prov. xiii. 21. Do all the creatures share in the sad effects of sin? Yes: cursed is the ground for thy sake, Gen. iii. 17. And could all this mischief come from that one sin? Yes: for how great a matter does a little fire kindle, James iii. 5, 6.

3. Did the fall bring mankind into a state of apostasy from God? Yes: for they are all gone aside, Ps. xiv. 3. Is that a sinful state? Yes: for it is

great whoredom to depart from the Lord, Hos. i. 2. And is it a miserable state? Yes: Woe unto them, for they have fled from me, Hos. vii. 13.

4. Did the fall bring mankind into a state of slavery to Satan? Yes: for they are taken captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Is that a sinful state? Yes: for the prince of the power of the air works in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. Is it a miserable state? Yes: for the God of this world hath blinded their minds, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Is it like the condition of the prodigal son? Yes: for he went into a far country, wasted his substance, began to be in want, and was sent into the fields to feed swine, Luke xv. 13—15.

Q. 18. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell?*

A. The sinfulness of that state whereinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, (which is commonly called original sin,) together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

1. Are we all born under guilt? Yes: for all the world is guilty before God, Rom. iii. 19. Does the whole race of mankind stand attainted at God's bar? Yes: for the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, Gal. iii. 22. Is this according to God's rule of judgment? Yes: for he visiteth the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, Exod. xx. 5. Is not God unrighteous who thus takes vengeance? No: God forbid, for then how shall God judge the world, Rom. iii. 6.

2. Are we all born in sin? Yes: Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me, Ps. li. 5. Are we of a sinful brood? Yes: for we are a seed of evil-doers, Isa. i. 4. May we be truly called sinners by nature? Yes: Thou wast called a transgressor from the womb, Isa. xlviii. 8.

3. Is there in every one of us by nature the want of original righteousness? Yes: there is none righteous, no, not one, Rom. iii. 10. Is there in us an aversion to that which is good? Yes: for the carnal mind is enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7. Is there in us a moral impotency to that which is good? Yes: for the carnal mind is not in subjection to the law of God, neither indeed can be, Rom. viii. 7. Can we of ourselves do any thing that is good? No: for we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5.

4. Is there in us a proneness to that which is evil? Yes: My people are bent to backsliding from me, Hos. xi. 7. Are there the snares of sin in our bodies? Yes: for there is a law in the members warring against the law of the mind, Rom. vii. 23. And are there the seeds of sin in our souls? Yes: For when I would do good, evil is present with me, Rom. vii. 21. And is the stain of sin upon both? Yes: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Rom. iii. 23.

5. Did we all bring sin into the world with us? Yes: for man is born like the wild ass's colt, Job xi. 12. Is it in little children? Yes: for foolishness is in the heart of a child, Prov. xxii. 15. As reason improves, does sin grow up with it? Yes: for when the blade is sprung up, then appear the tares also, Matt. xiii. 26. Is it not a wonder of mercy then that we are any of us alive? Yes: it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, Lam. iii. 22.

6. Is the whole nature of man corrupted by the fall? Yes: The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint, Isa. i. 5. Is the understanding corrupted? Yes: the understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. Is that unapt to admit the rays of divine light? Yes: for they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Is the will corrupted? Yes: The neck is an iron sinew, Isa. xlviii. 4. And is that unapt to submit to the rule of the divine law? Yes: For what is the Almighty (say they) that we should serve him? Job xxi. 15. Are the thoughts corrupted? Yes: for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, Gen. viii. 21. Is the fancy full of vanity? Yes: vain thoughts lodge within us, Jer. iv. 15. Are the affections corrupted? Yes: It is a carnal mind, Rom. viii. 7. Is conscience itself corrupted? Yes: even the mind and conscience is defiled, Tit. i. 15. Is the whole soul corrupted? Yes: the heart is deceitful above all things, Jer. xvii. 9.

7. Is this corruption of the mind sin? Yes: for it is enmity agianst God, Rom. viii. 7. Have we it from our original? Yes: for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, John iii. 6. Do we derive it through our parents? Yes: for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Job xiv. 4. Does it render us odious to God's holiness? Yes: for the foolish shall not stand in his sight, Ps. v. 5. Does it render us obnoxious to his justice? Yes: for death reigns over them that have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgressions, Rom. v. 14.

8. Does this original corruption produce actual transgression? Yes: for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, Matt. vii. 18. Does it produce it betimes? Yes: for the wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies, Ps. lviii. 3. Does it produce it naturally? Yes: as a fountain casteth out her waters, Jer. vi. 7. Does all sin begin in the heart? Yes: for when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, James i. 15. Is it not necessary therefore we should have a new nature? Yes: Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again, John iii. 7. Can we get to heaven without it? No: for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor xv. 50.

Q. 19. *What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

1. When our first parents had eaten the forbidden fruit, did they become as gods? No: they were like the beasts that perish, Ps. xlix. 12. Did the devil make his words good then? No: for he is a liar, and the father of it, John viii. 44. Did not he put a cheat upon them? Yes: the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, Gen. iii. 13. Did shame come in with sin? Yes: for they knew that they were naked, Gen. iii. 7. Did fear come in with sin? Yes: for they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden, Gen. iii. 8. Was not that their misery? Yes: for fear hath torment, 1 John iv. 18.

2. Did they lose communion with God? Yes: for he drove out the man, Gen. iii. 24. Is fallen man unworthy of communion with God? Yes: for what communion has light with darkness? 2 Cor. ii. 14. Is he unfit for communion with God? Yes: for can two walk together except they be agreed? Amos iii. 3. Could fallen man ever get to heaven by virtue of the covenant of innocency? No: for cherubims and a flaming sword were set to keep that way to the tree of life, Gen. iii. 24.

3. Is fallen man under God's wrath? Yes: for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, Rom. i. 18. Are we all so by nature? Yes: we are by nature children of wrath, even as others, Eph. ii. 2. Are we so by reason of sin? Yes: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, Eph. v. 6. Is there a distance between God and man by reason of sin? Yes: your iniquities have separated between you and your God, Isa. lix. 2. Is there a quarrel between God and man by reason of sin? Yes: My soul loathed them, and their soul also it abhorred me, Zech. xi. 8. Is it not sad to lie under God's wrath? Yes: for who knows the power of his anger? Ps. xc. 11.

4. Is fallen man under God's curse? Yes: for cursed is every one that continues not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. iii. 10. Is this curse in force against all wicked people? Yes: the curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, Prov. iii. 33. Has sin brought a curse upon the world? Yes: Cursed is the ground for thy sake, Gen. iii. 17.

5. Is mankind by the fall become liable to the miseries of this life? Yes: In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life, Gen. iii. 17. Are we all by nature liable to these miseries? Yes: for man is born to trouble, Job v. 7. Is all the hurtfulness of the creatures the effect of sin? Yes: Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth, Gen. iii. 18. Is the toil of business the effect of sin? Yes: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, *v.* 19. Is pain and sickness the effect of sin? Yes: There is not any rest in my bones, because of my sin, Ps. xxxviii. 3. Are all our crosses the effect of sin? Yes: our sins have withholden good things from us, Jer. v. 25. Should we not therefore bear them patiently? Yes: Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sin? Lam. iii. 39.

6. Is all mankind by the fall become liable to death itself? Yes: for so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. v. 12. Was a sentence of death immediately passed upon fallen man? Yes: Dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return, Gen. iii. 19. Do we all deserve death? Yes: the wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. 23. Is it the natural consequence of sin? Yes: for sin, when it is finished, brings forth death, Jam. i. 15. Can any avoid it? No: What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Ps. lxxxix. 48. Is it determined? Yes: it is appointed to men once to die, Heb. ix. 27. Do you expect it? Yes: I know that thou wilt bring me to death, Job xxx. 23. Is sin the sting of death? Yes: the sting of death is sin, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Is the amazing fear of death the effect of sin? Yes: there are those who through fear of death are all their life-time subject to bondage, Heb. ii. 15. Is the body's rotting in the grave the effect of sin? Yes: as drought and heat consume the snow-waters, so doth the grave those which have sinned, Job xxiv. 19.

7. Is mankind by the fall become liable to the pains of hell for ever? Yes: for he that wanders out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead, Prov. xxi. 16. Ps. ix. 17. Can God make a soul for ever miserable? Yes: for after he hath killed he hath power to cast into hell, Luke xii. 5. Is there a state of punishment in the other life? Yes: for we are warned to flee from the wrath to come, Matt. iii. 7. Is it the desert of sin? Yes: for when God renders to every man according to his works, he will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, Rom. ii. 8, 9. Will it be the portion of impenitent sinners? Yes: Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell, Matt. xxiii. 33.

8. Is hell the wrath of an everlasting God? Yes: for the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it, Isa. xxx. 33. Is it the anguish of an immortal soul? Yes: for their worm dieth not, Mark ix. 44. Is any way of relief open to them? No: Betwixt us and you there is a gulf fixed, Luke xvi. 26. Is their punishment therefore everlasting? Yes: These shall go away into ever-

lasting punishment, Matt. xxv. 46. Should we not every one of us dread it? Yes: for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb. x. 31. Isa. xxxiii. 14.

Q. 20. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the state of sin and misery?*

A. God having out of his mere good pleasure from all eternity elected some to eternal life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of a state of sin and misery, and to bring them into a state of salvation by a Redeemer.

1. Might not God justly have left all mankind to perish in their fallen state? Yes: for in his sight shall no man living be justified, Ps. cxliii. 2. Would God have been a loser by it, if they had been left to perish? No: for, can a man be profitable to God? Job xxii. 2. But did he leave them to perish? No: for the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man appears, Tit. iii. 4. Was the case of fallen angels helpless and desperate? Yes: for God spared not them, 2 Pet. ii. 4. But is the case of fallen man so? No: for he is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, 2 Pet. iii. 9. Is God's patience a token for good? Yes: the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, 2 Pet. iii. 15. Does it appear that God has a good will to man's salvation? Yes: As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Is this an encouragement to us all to hope in his mercy? Yes: for if the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have showed us such things as these, Judg. xiii. 23.

2. Could man help himself out of his state of sin and misery? No: for when we were without strength Christ died for the ungodly, Rom. v. 6. Could any creature help us? No: for none of them can by any means redeem his brother, Ps. xlix. 7. Could God himself only help us? Yes: O Israel! thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help, Hos. xiii. 9. Did God contrive a way for man's recovery? Yes: he hath devised means that his banished may not be expelled from him, 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Was it the contrivance of infinite wisdom? Yes: it is the wisdom of God in a mystery, ordained before the world for our glory, 1 Cor. ii. 7. Has he provided a way for our recovery? Yes: I have found a ransom, Job xxxiii. 24.

3. Did God particularly design the salvation of a remnant of mankind? Yes: there is a remnant according to the election of grace, Rom. xi. 5. Are there some whom God has chosen? Yes: God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, 2 Thes. ii. 13. Is there a certain number of such? Yes: for their names are in the book of life, Phil. iv. 3. Rev. xiii. 8. Were they chosen from eternity? Yes: he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 4. Were they chosen for the sake of any thing in themselves? No: Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, John xv. 16. But of his mere good pleasure? Yes: he hath predestinated us according to the good pleasure of his will, Eph. i. 5. Were they chosen to salvation as the end? Yes: God had appointed us to obtain salvation, 1 Thess. v. 9. And to sanctification as the means? Yes: he has chosen us that we should be holy, Eph. i. 4. Was it for the glory of God? Yes: that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, Rom. ix. 23.

4. Shall the election obtain? Yes: the purpose of God according to election shall stand, Rom. ix. 11. Does our salvation begin there? Yes: we love him, because he first loved us, 1 John iv. 19. Are others passed by? Yes: when the election hath obtained, the rest are blinded, Rom. xi. 7. Does God know certainly whom he has chosen? Yes: the Lord knows them that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Do we know it? No: for secret things belong not to us, Deut. xxix. 29. Can we know our own election otherwise than by our being sanctified? No: we must make our calling, and so make our election, sure, 2 Pet. i. 10.

5. Were the elect given to Christ? Yes: Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, John xvii. 6. Did he undertake their salvation? Yes: For this is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, John vi. 39. Was it promised him that he should effect it? Yes: He shall see his seed, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, Isa. liii. 10. And was he himself assured of it? Yes: All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, John vi. 37. And does it always prove so? Yes: As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Acts xiii. 48. And shall any of them miscarry? No: for it is said of seducers, they shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, Matt. xxiv. 24.

6. Has God entered into a new covenant, pursuant hereto? Yes: for we are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi. 14. Does he insist upon the terms of the first covenant? No: he hath not dealt with us after our sins, Ps. ciii. 10. Is he willing to deal with us upon new terms? Yes: I will make a new covenant with them, Jer. xxxi. 31. Is he willing to be ours in covenant? Yes: I will be to them a God, Heb. viii. 10. Will he accept us as his? Yes: they shall be to me a people. And will he be at peace with us? Yes: God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, 2 Cor. v. 19.

7. Is this wrought out by a Redeemer? Yes: for there is not salvation in any other, Acts iv. 12. Was that Redeemer of God's own providing? Yes: God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, John iii. 16. Is the new covenant made with us in Christ? Yes: for he is the Mediator of the

better covenant, Heb. viii. 6. Is it a covenant much for our advantage? Yes: for it is well ordered in all things and sure, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Is perfect obedience the condition of it? No: for if by grace, then it is no more of works, Rom. xi. 6. Is faith the condition of it? Yes: for by grace ye are saved through faith, Eph. ii. 8. Is sincerity accepted as our gospel perfection? Yes: Walk before me, and be thou perfect, Gen. xvii. 1. Is that which is required in the covenant promised in the covenant? Yes: I will cause you to walk in my statutes, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. Does every transgression in the covenant cast us out of the covenant? No: I will visit their transgression with a rod, but my loving-kindness will I not utterly take away, Ps. lxxxix. 32, 33.

8. Will this covenant deliver us out of a state of sin and misery? Yes: Whosoever believes in Christ shall not perish, John iii. 16. Will it bring us into a state of salvation? Yes: He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, John iii. 36. And can we desire any more? No: It is all my salvation, and all my desire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

9. Was there intimation given to Adam of this way of salvation by a Redeemer? Yes: for it was said to him, That the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15. Was it made known to the Old-Testament saints? Yes: for of this salvation have the prophets inquired, and searched diligently, 1 Pet. i. 10. But is it brought to a clearer light in the New Testament? Yes: Go preach the gospel to every creature; he that believes shall be saved, and he that believes not shall be damned, Mark xvi. 15, 16. Is this good news to fallen man? Yes: Glory be to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men, Luke ii. 14. Does this covenant exclude any that do not exclude themselves? No: Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely, Rev. xxii. 17.

Q. 21. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man; and so was, and continues to be, God and Man, in two distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

1. Did mankind need a Redeemer? Yes: for by our iniquities we had sold ourselves, Isa. l. 1. Did the elect themselves need a Redeemer? Yes: for we ourselves also were sometimes disobedient, Tit. iii. 3. Would there have been a Redeemer if Adam had not sinned? No: for they that be whole need not a physician, Matt. ix. 12. Could an angel have been our Redeemer? No: for his angels he charged with folly, Job iv. 18.

2. Is Jesus Christ the Redeemer? Yes: there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Is he the only Redeemer? Yes: for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, Acts iv. 12. Is he a universal Redeemer? Yes: he gave himself a ransom for all, 1 Tim. ii. 6. Did he die to purchase a general offer? Yes: the Son of man was lifted up, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, John iii. 14, 15. Is all the world the better for Christ's mediation? Yes: for by him all things consist, Col. i. 17. Is it long of Christ then that so many perish? No: I would have gathered you, and you would not, Matt. xxiii. 37.

3. Is Christ in a special manner the Redeemer of God's elect? Yes: I lay down my life for the sheep, John x. 15. Was their salvation particularly designed in Christ's undertaking? Yes: Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him, John xvii. 2. Was their sanctification particularly designed? Yes: For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified, John xvii. 19. Is all mankind redeemed from among devils? Yes: for none must say as they did, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, Matt. viii. 29. But are the elect redeemed from among men? Yes: these were redeemed from among men, Rev. xiv. 4.

4. Is the Redeemer LORD? Yes: every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, Phil. ii. 11. Is he Jesus a Saviour? Yes: Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins, Matt. i. 21. Is he Christ anointed? Yes: for God, even thy God, hath anointed thee, Heb. i. 9. Is he Emmanuel? Yes: They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us, Matt. i. 23.

5. Is he the Son of God? Yes: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, Matt. xvi. 16. Is he the Eternal Son of God? Yes: for he is before all things, Col. i. 17. Is he God? Yes: unto the Son he says, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, Heb. i. 8. Is he true God? Yes: His Son Jesus Christ is the true God, and eternal life, 1 John v. 20. Is he the most high God? Yes: for Christ is over all, God, blessed for ever, Rom. ix. 5. Is he equal with the Father? Yes: for he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, Phil. ii. 6. Is he one with the Father? Yes: I and my Father are one, John x. 30. Is he to be worshipped as God? Yes: for all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father, John v. 23. Is he worshipped by the angels? Yes: Let all the angels of God worship him, Heb. i. 6. And is there good reason for it? Yes: for he is the brightness of his Father's glory, Heb. i. 3. Was he begotten of his Father before all worlds? Yes: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Ps. ii. 7. Is he the only-begotten Son of God? Yes: We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, John i. 14.

6. Did the Son of God become man? Yes: the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, John i. xiv. Did he come into this world? Yes: he came forth from the Father, and came into the world, John xvi. 28. Did he come in the fittest time? Yes: when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, Gal. iv. 4. Did he come with a full commission? Yes: for the Father sanctified him, and sent him into the world, John x. 36. Did he come to save us? Yes: The son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost, Luke xix. 10. Did he come to conquer Satan? Yes: for this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8.

7. Did the Redeemer take our nature upon him? Yes: he was found in fashion as a man, Phil. ii. 8. Had he a being before his incarnation? Yes: Before Abraham was, I am, John viii. 58. Had he a being before the world? Yes: for the same was in the beginning with God, John i. 2. Is not his incarnation a great mystery? Yes: without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Is it necessary that we believe it? Yes: for he that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God, 1 John iv. 3. Was Jesus Christ God even when he was upon earth? Yes: I am in the Father, and the Father in me, John xiv. 11. Is he man now he is in heaven? Yes: for he that descended is the same also that ascended, Eph. iv. 10.

8. Is the Redeemer both God and man? Yes: for to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and he shall be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father, Isa. ix. 6. Is he both the Son of God, and the Son of man? Yes: he was the Son of Adam, he was the Son of God, Luke iii. 38. Does he continue to be so? Yes: for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. Was he man that he might suffer? Yes: for without shedding of blood is no remission, Heb. ix. 22. Was he God that he might satisfy? Yes: for God has purchased the church with his own blood, Acts xx. 28. Is he God and man in two distinct natures? Yes: for he is both the root and offspring of David, Rev. xxii. 16. compare Matt. xxii. 45. Is he so in one person? Yes: for to us there is but one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him, 1 Cor. viii. 6. Is he so for ever? Yes: he is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last, Rev. xxii. 13.

9. Is this Jesus the true Messiah promised to the fathers? Yes: we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world, John iv. 42. Were the Scriptures fulfilled in him? Yes: to him give all the prophets witness, Acts x. 43. Did his miracles prove his doctrine? Yes: The works that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me, John v. 36. Did the Father himself bear witness of him? Yes: by a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him, Matt. xvii. 5. May we venture our souls upon this foundation? Yes: for this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son, 1 John v. 11.

Q. 22. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?*

A. Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

1. Did Christ the Son of God become man? Yes: forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, Heb. ii. 14. Was it requisite he should become man? Yes: for in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, Heb. ii. 17. Has the Son of man the fulness of the Godhead? Yes: for in him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, Col. ii. 9. Has the Son of God the tenderness of a man? Yes: for he was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, Heb. iv. 15.

2. Did Christ take unto himself a true body? Yes: A body hast thou prepared me, Heb. x. 5. Was it a body like unto ours? Yes: for he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3. Did he take to himself a human soul? Yes: for he said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, Matt. xxvi. 38.

3. Was he conceived by ordinary generation? No: for he said, Ye are beneath, I am from above, John viii. 23. Was he conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost? Yes: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, Luke i. 35. Was he born of the Virgin Mary? Yes: the Scripture was fulfilled, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bring forth a son, Matt. i. 23. Was his conception and birth supernatural? Yes: that which was conceived in the Virgin Mary was of the Holy Ghost, Matt. i. 20. Yet was he really and truly man? Yes: for he is not ashamed to call us brethren, Heb. ii. 11.

4. Was Christ the seed of the woman? Yes: for he was made of a woman, Gal. iv. 4. Was the Scripture therein fulfilled? Yes: for the seed of the woman must break the serpent's head, Gen. iii. 15. Was he the Son of Abraham? Yes: for he took on him the seed of Abraham, Heb. ii. 16. Was the Scripture therein fulfilled? Yes: for it was said to Abraham, In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, Gen. xii. 2. Was he the Son of David? Yes: Hosanna to the Son of David, Matt. xxi. 9. Was the Scripture therein fulfilled? Yes: He hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets, Luke i. 69, 70.

5. Was Christ born in Bethlehem? Yes: To you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, Luke ii. 11. Was he born among the Jews? Yes: of them as concerning the flesh, Christ came, Rom. ix. 5. And was it the honour of that nation? Yes: he was the glory of his people Israel, Luke ii. 32. Did he come when the Messiah was expected? Yes: they then looked for redemption in Jerusalem, Luke ii. 38. Did he come when the sceptre was departed from Judah? Yes: for there then went out a decree that all the world should be taxed, Luke ii. 1. Did the angels attend him at his birth? Yes: there was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, Luke ii. 13.

6. Was the Redeemer born in sin as we are? No: he was without sin, Heb. iv. 15. Was he perfectly pure and holy? Yes: That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God, Luke i. 35. Was he pure and holy in his whole life? Yes: he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, 1 Pet. ii. 22. Was it requisite he should be so? Yes: such a High Priest became us, that was holy, harmless, and undefiled, Heb. vii. 26. Could he have satisfied for our sin, if he had had any sin of his own? No: for he must through the eternal Spirit offer himself without spot, Heb. ix. 14.

7. Was he subject to the sinless infirmities of our natures? Yes: he was in all points tempted like as we are, Heb. iv. 15. Was he hungry? Yes: when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred, Matt. iv. 2. Was he weary? Yes: Being weary with his journey, he sat on the well, John iv. 6. Did he sleep? Yes: when the ship was covered with waves he was asleep, Matt. viii. 24. Did he pass through the ages of human life? Yes: for Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, Luke ii. 52.

8. Was the Redeemer willing to be incarnate for us? Yes: for when he cometh into the world, he saith, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, Heb. x. 5, 7. Is it well for us that he was so? Yes: for by this will we are sanctified, Heb. x. 10. Was Christ's incarnation great condescension in him? Yes: for hereby he was made a little lower than the angels, Heb. ii. 9. Was it a great honour to our nature? Yes: What is man that thou art thus mindful of him? Heb. ii. 6—8. Is it good news to mankind? Yes: This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Q. 23. *What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?*

A. Christ as our Redeemer executes the offices of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King, both in his state of humiliation and exaltation.

1. Is Christ a complete Redeemer? Yes: for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, Col. i. 19. Is he completely qualified for the undertaking? Yes: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him, John iii. 34. Is he authorized for it? Yes: for all things are delivered to him of the Father, Matt. xi. 27. Has he a full commission? Yes: for the Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, John v. 22. And has he an ability equal to his authority? Yes: for as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, *v.* 26.

2. Is there all that in Christ which fallen man stands in need of? Yes: for Christ is all, and in all, Col. iii. 11. Is he light? Yes: I am the light of the world, John viii. 12. Is he life? Yes: in him was life, and the life was the light of men, John i. 4. Is he our peace? Yes: he is our peace, Eph. ii. 14. Is he our head? Yes: he is the head of the body, the church, Col. i. 18. Is he the door? Yes: I am the door of the sheep, John x. 7. Is he the way? Yes: I am the way, the truth, and the life, John xiv. 6. Can we come to God as a Father, otherwise than by Jesus Christ as Mediator? No: for no man cometh to the Father but by me, John xiv. 6. Is he our food? Yes: I am that bread of life, John vi. 48. Is he our friend? Yes: This is my beloved, and this is my friend, Cant. v. 16.

3. Is Jesus Christ a Redeemer in office? Yes: for God hath exalted him with his own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts v. 31. Is he duly put in office? Yes: for him hath God the Father sealed, John vi. 27. Does he duly execute his office? Yes: for he was faithful to him that appointed him, Heb. iii. 2. Is he a Prophet? Yes: This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world, John vi. 14. Is he a Priest? Yes: he is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Heb. iii. 1. Is he a King? Yes: he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. xix. 16.

4. Did Christ execute these offices in his state of humiliation? Yes: I have glorified thee on the earth, John xvii. 4. Does he execute them in his state of exaltation? Yes: for in heaven itself he now appears in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. Is he then an all-sufficient Saviour? Yes: he is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him, Heb. vii. 25. And is he as willing to save as he is able? Yes: Whosoever comes unto me I will in no wise cast out, John vi. 37.

Q. 24, *How does Christ execute the office of a Prophet?*

A Christ executes the office of a Prophet, in revealing to us by his Word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation.

1. Does Christ execute the office of a Prophet? Yes: We know that thou art a Teacher come from God, John iii. 2. Does God speak to us by him?

Yes: he hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, Heb. i. 2. Were there prophets under the Old Testament? Yes: God sent his servants the prophets, Jer. xxv. 4. But was Christ above them all? Yes: for he is the Lord God of the holy prophets, Rev. xxii. 6. compare Col. i. 11. And were they his agents? Yes: it was the Spirit of Christ in them that testified, 1 Pet. i. 11.

2. Was Moses the great type of Christ as a prophet? Yes: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me, Acts iii. 22. But was Christ greater than Moses? Yes: for Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son, Heb. iii. 5, 6. And is the doctrine of Christ better than that of Moses? Yes: for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, John i. 17. Was Christ completely qualified to be a Prophet? Yes: for in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, Col. ii. 3. Was ever any other so well qualified? No: for no man knows the Father, but the Son, Matt. xi. 27.

3. Has Christ, as a Prophet, revealed God's will to us? Yes: for he said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me, John vii. 16. and xii. 49, 50. Has he revealed God's will concerning our duty? Yes: for he did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil, Matt. v. 17. And concerning our happiness? Yes: for he was anointed to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, Luke iv. 18.

4. Did Christ execute this office when he was on earth? Yes: for he taught them as one having authority, Matt. vii. 29. Did he introduce his doctrine with Thus saith the Lord, like the Old-Testament prophets? No: but Verily, Verily, I say unto you, John iii. 3. Did he confirm his doctrine by miracles? Yes: believe me (said he) for the very works' sake, John xiv. 11. Were his miracles many? Yes: many signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, John xx. 30. Were they profitable? Yes: he went about doing good, Acts x. 38. Did Christ teach by the example of his life? Yes: that we might follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21.

5. Does he still execute this office? Yes: for he said, I have declared thy name unto them, and will declare it, John xvii. 26. Does he reveal God's will to us by his word? Yes: for these things are written that we may believe, John xx. 31. And by his Spirit? Yes: The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, he shall teach you all things, John xiv. 26. Does Jesus Christ teach his people? Yes: All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, Isa. liv. 13. And does he teach effectually? Yes: for the Son of man is come, and hath given us an understanding, 1 John v. 20. And does he teach compassionately? Yes: for he can have compassion on the ignorant, Heb. v. 2.

6. Must we learn of this Teacher? Yes: Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, Matt. xi. 29. Are we to receive his doctrine? Yes: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, Col. iii. 16. And must we abide in it? Yes: If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, John viii. 31.

Q. 25. *How does Christ execute the office of a Priest?*

A. Christ executes the office of a Priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.

1. Did fallen man need a Priest? Yes: for every high priest is ordained for man in things pertaining to God, Heb. v. 1. Did Christ execute the office of a Priest? Yes: We have a great High Priest, Jesus the Son of God, Heb. iv. 14. Was he appointed to this office? Yes: for Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest, Heb. v. 5. Was he confirmed in this office? Yes: for the Lord sware, and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever, Heb. vii. 21.

2. Did Christ, as a Priest, make atonement for sin? Yes: he is a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, Heb. ii. 17. Did he do this by the sacrifice of himself? Yes: he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, Heb. ix. 26. Was he himself the Priest? Yes: for through the eternal Spirit he offered himself, Heb. ix. 14. Was he himself the sacrifice? Yes: he made his soul an offering for sin, Isa. liii. 10. Was he himself the altar? Yes: for we have an altar, Heb. xiii. 10. Would not the legal sacrifices serve? No: for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin, Heb. x. 4. Did God declare them insufficient? Yes: Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, *v.* 5. Was this sacrifice necessary then? Yes: what the law could not do, in that it was weak, that Christ did, Rom. viii. 3.

3. Did Christ, as a sacrifice, bear our sins? Yes: his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Did he bear them by the Father's appointment? Yes: the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all, Isa. liii. 6. Did he suffer for them? Yes: he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, *v.* 5. And not for any sin of his own? No: Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself, Dan. ix. 26. Did he suffer to satisfy for sin? Yes: he was once offered to bear the sins of many, Heb. ix. 28. And was the satisfaction accepted? Yes: he gave himself for us, a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour, Eph. v. 2.

4. Did Christ offer himself voluntarily? Yes: No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself, John x. 18. Was it his own act and deed to make his soul an offering? Yes: for he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, Luke xxiii. 46. Did this sacrifice need to be repeated? No: for by one offering he perfected for ever them

that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14. Did Christ do this for the purchase of our pardon? Yes: for when he did it, he said, Father, forgive them, Luke xxiii. 34. Was it designed to save us from ruin? Yes: he gave his life a ransom for many, Matt. xx. 28. And to reconcile us to God? Yes: for he made peace through the blood of his cross, Col. i. 20. Is this our plea for peace and pardon? Yes: Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, Rom. viii. 34. Is Christ then the great propitiation? Yes: he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world, 1 John ii. 2. And have we hereby access to God? Yes: he suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18. And had the Old-Testament saints the benefit of this sacrifice? Yes: for he was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 8.

5. Does Christ, as a Priest, make intercession? Yes: for he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors, Isa. liii. 12. Is he always doing this? Yes: he ever lives, making intercession, Heb. vii. 25. Does he do this as an Advocate? Yes: If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, 1 John ii. 1. And as a High Priest? Yes: Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord, Exod. xxviii. 12. Does he make intercession in the virtue of his satisfaction? Yes: for by his own blood he entered into the holy place, Heb. ix. 12.

6. Is Christ a Priest after the order of Aaron? No: but after the order of Melchisedec, Ps. cx. 4. Is he a royal Priest? Yes: for he is a Priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both, Zec. vi. 13. Is he a priest that needs a successor? No: for this man, because he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood, Heb. vii. 24. Is he a Priest that needs a sacrifice for himself? No: for the law makes men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath makes the Son, who is consecrated for evermore, Heb. vii. 28. Have all believers an interest in Christ's priesthood? Yes: for we have a High Priest over the house of God, Heb. x. 21. Is this an encouragement in our approaches to God? Yes: let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, Heb. iv. 16. And is this it we must depend upon for our acceptance with God? Yes: for spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Q. 26. *How does Christ execute the office of a King?*

A. Christ executes the office of a King, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

1. Is Christ put into the office of a King? Yes: I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion, Ps. ii. 6. Does he execute that office? Yes: he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, Luke i. 33. Is he King as Mediator? Yes: he hath authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man, John v. 27. Is his kingdom a spiritual kingdom? Yes: my kingdom is not of this world, John xviii. 36.

2. Is Christ universal monarch? Yes: for all power is given to him both in heaven and on earth, Matt. xxviii. 18. Has he a right to rule all? Yes: he is Lord of all, Acts x. 36. Does he rule all? Yes: he is the Governor among the nations, Ps. xxii. 28. Does he rule all for the good of his church? Yes: he is head over all things to the church, Eph. i. 22. Is he in a special manner the church's King? Yes: O daughter of Sion, thy King comes, Zech. ix. 9.

3. Does Christ, as a King, subdue his people to himself? Yes: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, Ps. cx. 3. Does he do it by the word of his grace? Yes: he draws with the cords of a man, and with the bands of love, Hos. xi. 4. Does he do it effectually? Yes: he makes ready a people prepared for the Lord, Luke i. 17. Does he conquer the opposition of the carnal mind? Yes: for the weapons of our warfare are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, 2 Cor. x. 4. Does he set up his throne in the soul? Yes: bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, 2 Cor. x. 5. And does he rule there? Yes: for he writes his law in their hearts, Heb. viii. 10.

4. Does Christ, as a King, reign in his church? Yes: The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, Isa. xxxiii. 22. Does he enact laws? Yes: he gave commandments to his apostles, Acts i. 2. Does he commission officers? Yes: By me kings reign, Prov. viii. 15. Does he give judgment? Yes: we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 10. Is homage and allegiance due to him? Yes: for at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, Phil. ii. 10. Does he rule in righteousness? Yes: the sceptre of his kingdom is a right sceptre, Ps. xlv. 6.

5. Does Christ, as a King, protect his subjects? Yes: for he shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, Isa. xxxii. 2. And does he secure the peace of his kingdom? Yes: for this man shall be the peace, Mic. v. 5. Has he authority to pardon sin? Yes: the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sin, Matt. ix. 6. Has he authority to reward services? Yes: I will give thee a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10.

6. Does Christ, as King, restrain his enemies? Yes: on this Rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Matt. xvi. 18. Will he conquer them at last? Yes: for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, 1 Cor. xv. 25. Will he conquer death itself? Yes: the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death,

1 Cor. xv. 26. Does he count those his enemies that will not have him to reign over them? Yes: Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them bring hither, and slay them before me, Luke xix. 27.

7. Is Christ a merciful King? Yes: he is meek, and having salvation, Zech. ix. 9. Is he the poor man's king? Yes: he shall deliver the needy when he cries, Ps. lxxii. 12. Has he a large kingdom? Yes: he shall have dominion from sea to sea, Ps. lxxii. 8. Have we reason to hope it shall be larger than now it is? Yes: for the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, Rev. xi. 15. Shall it be a lasting kingdom? Yes: his throne shall be as the days of heaven, Ps. lxxxix. 29. And when the mystery of God shall be finished, shall the kingdom of the Redeemer be resigned to the Creator? Yes: then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, 1 Cor. xv. 24.

8. Ought we to rejoice in Christ's dominion? Yes: Let the children of Sion be joyful in their King, Ps. cxlix. 2. Must we accept him for our King? Yes: Take my yoke upon you, Matt. xi. 29. Must we pay tribute to him? Yes: Send ye the Lamb to the ruler of the land, Isa. xvi. 1. Must we obey him? Yes: for he is the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, Heb. v. 9.

Q. 27. *Wherein did consist Christ's humiliation?*

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

1. Did Jesus Christ humble himself? Yes: for being in the form of God, he made himself of no reputation, Phil. ii. 6, 7. Was it a deep humiliation? Yes: for he said, I am a worm, and no man, Ps. xxii. 6. Was it requisite he should humble himself? Yes: for thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, Luke xxiv. 46. And was that a proper expedient to atone for our sin? Yes: for the sinner had said, I will be like the Most High, Isa. xiv. 14.

2. Did Christ humble himself in his birth? Yes: for he who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was made in the likeness of men, Phil. ii. 6, 7. Was he born of that which was then a poor family? Yes: he was a root of dry ground, Isa. liii. 2. Was he born of a poor woman? Yes: for she offered for her cleansing only a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons, Luke ii. 24. compare Lev. xii. 8. Was his supposed father a poor man? Yes: they said, Is not this the carpenter's son, Matt. xiii. 55. Was he born in a poor place? Yes: Bethlehem was little among the thousands of Judah, Mic. v. 2. Was he born in poor circumstances? Yes: in the stable of an inn, and laid in a manger, Luke ii. 7. Had he the respect paid him that was due to an incarnate Deity? No: for he was in the world, and the world knew him not, John i. 10. Was he respected by his countrymen? No: he came to his own, and his own received him not, *v.* 11. Was he born honourably? No: for he took upon him the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 7. Was he born wealthy? No: though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, 2 Cor. viii. 9.

3. Was Christ made under the law? Yes: God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, Gal. iv. 4. Was he circumcised? Yes: when eight days were accomplished, Luke ii. 21. Was he presented in the temple? Yes: they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, *v.* 22. Did he keep the passover? Yes: when he was twelve years old, he went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast, *v.* 42. Was he obedient to his parents? Yes: he went down with them to Nazareth, and was subject to them, *v.* 51. Did he pay tribute? Yes: That give for me and thee, Matt. xvii. 24, 27. Did he fulfil all righteousness? Yes: Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness, Matt. iii. 15. Did he submit to the law of the mediatorship? Yes: Thy law is within my heart, Ps. xl. 8.

4. Was his education mean? Yes: for they said, Is not this the carpenter? Mark vi. 3. Was the place of his abode despicable? Yes: Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? John i. 46. Did he live in honour? No: for he was despised and rejected of men, Isa. liii. 3. Was he attended by great folks? No: Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him? John vii. 48. Were his followers mean? Yes: for they were fishers, Matt. iv. 18. Did he live in mirth and pleasure? No: he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, Isa. liii. 3. Was the sin of sinners a grief to him? Yes: he was grieved for the hardness of their hearts, Mark iii. 5. Were the sorrows of his friends a grief to him? Yes: Jesus wept, John xi. 35. Had he a house of his own? No: The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head, Luke xi. 58. Was he fed with the finest of the wheat? No: he had barley-loaves, John vi. 9. Did he live upon alms? Yes: for certain women ministered to him of their substance, Luke viii. 3. Had he a stately place to preach in? No: he taught the people out of the ship, Luke v. 3.

5. Was he tempted of Satan? Yes: he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, Mark i. 13. Was that a part of his sufferings? Yes: for he suffered, being tempted, Heb. ii. 18. Was he persecuted betimes? Yes: Herod sought the young child to destroy him, Matt. ii. 13. Was he slandered and reproached? Yes: they said of him,

Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, Luke vii. 34. Was he represented as a madman? Yes: they said, He hath a devil, and is mad, John x. 20. And as one that is in league with the devil? Yes: they said, He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils, Matt. xii. 24. Did they cavil at his preaching? Yes: he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, Heb. xii. 3. Did he bear all this patiently? Yes: when he was reviled, he reviled not again, 1 Pet. ii. 23.

6. But notwithstanding this, had he honour done him in his humiliation? Yes: for it was said of him, He shall be great, Luke i. 32. Did God put honour upon him? Yes: he received from God the Father honour and glory, 2 Pet. i. 17. Did angels do him honour? Yes: behold, angels came and ministered to him, Matt. iv. 11. Did foreigners do him honour? Yes: Wise men of the east came to worship him, Matt. ii. 2. Did the common report of the people do him honour? Yes: for some said he was Elias, others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, Matt. xvi. 14. Did those that saw his miracles do him honour? Yes: for they said, It was never so seen in Israel, Matt. ix. 33. Did inferior creatures do him honour? Yes: even the winds and the seas obeyed him, Matt. viii. 27. Were devils themselves compelled to acknowledge him? Yes: for they said, We know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God, Mark i. 24.

7. Did he humble himself unto death? Yes: he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, Phil. ii. 8. Did he die for us? Yes: he was delivered for our offences, Rom. iv. 25. Was this according to the counsels of God? Yes: he was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Acts ii. 23. Did he suffer in his soul? Yes; for he said, Now is my soul troubled, John xii. 27. Did he suffer from his Father? Yes: he was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted, Isa. liii. 4. Did he suffer in soul from his Father? Yes: for he put him to grief, *v.* 10. Did this put him into an agony? Yes: He began to be sorrowful, and very heavy, Matt. xxvi. 37. Did he suffer this for us? Yes: for he made him sin for us who knew no sin, 2 Cor. v. 21. And yet did the Father love him even when he bruised him? Yes: Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, John x. 17.

8. Did he suffer from Satan? Yes: Thou shalt bruise his heel, Gen. iii. 15. Did Satan set upon him? Yes: The prince of this world cometh, John xiv. 30. But did Satan conquer him? No: He hath nothing in me, John xiv. 30. Did he suffer from the Jews? Yes: for they cried, Crucify him, crucify him, Luke xxiii. 21. Did he suffer from the chief of the Jews? Yes: he was the stone which the builders refused, Ps. cxviii. 22. Did he suffer from the Romans? Yes: the princes of this world crucified the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. ii. 8. Was he betrayed by Judas? Yes: they put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him, John xiii. 2. Was he sold for thirty pieces of silver? Yes: A goodly price that I was prized at, Zech. xi. 13. Was he forsaken by his own disciples? Yes: all his disciples forsook him, and fled, Matt. xxvi. 56.

9. Was he falsely accused? Yes: they sought false witness against him to put him to death, Matt. xxvi. 59. Was he basely abused? Yes: he hid not his face from shame and spitting, Isa. l. 6. Was he condemned as a blasphemer? Yes: they said, He hath spoken blasphemy, Matt. xxvi. 65. Was he condemned as a traitor? Yes: for they said he perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, Luke xxiii. 2. Was he scourged? Yes: for by his stripes we are healed, Isa. liii. 5. Was he exposed to contempt? Yes: he was a reproach of men, and despised of the people, Ps. xxii. 6. Did they scoff at him as a Prophet? Yes: they said, Prophesy who smote thee, Matt. xxvi. 68. Did they scoff at him as a King? Yes: they said, Hail, King of the Jews, Matt. xxvii. 29. Did they scoff at him as a Priest and Saviour? Yes: they said, He saved others, himself he cannot save, Matt. xxvii. 42.

10. Was he sentenced to the cross? Yes: Pilate delivered him to be crucified, Matt. xxvii. 26. Was he crucified between two thieves; Yes: he was numbered with the transgressors, Isa. liii. 12. Did he die a bloody death? Yes: for the life of the flesh is in the blood, and it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul, Lev. xvii. 11. Did he die a painful death? Yes: they pierced his hands and feet, Ps. xxii. 16. And a shameful death? Yes: he endured the cross, despising the shame, Heb. xii. 2. And a cursed death? Yes: for he that is hanged is accursed of God, Deut. xxi. 23. Gal. iii. 13. Did God seem to withdraw from him in his sufferings? Yes: he cried with a loud voice, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Matt. xxvii. 46.

11. Did Christ die to glorify God? Yes: For this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name, John xii. 27, 28. Did he die to satisfy for our sins? Yes: it was to finish transgression, and to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. Did he die to conquer Satan? Yes: he spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in his cross, Col. ii. 15. Did he die to save us from sin? Yes: he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, Tit. ii. 14. Did he die to purchase heaven for us? Yes: for it is the purchased possession, Eph. i. 14. Heb. ix. 15. Was he in his death made a curse for us? Yes: for Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13. Did Christ sweat for us? Yes: his sweat was, as it were, great drops of

blood, Luke xxii. 44. And thorns being also a fruit of the curse, did Christ wear them for us? Yes: they platted a crown of thorns and put it upon his head, Matt. xxvii. 29.

12. Did Christ do all that was to be done in his sufferings for us? Yes: he said, It is finished, John xix. 30. Did the events answer the predictions? Yes: for the Scriptures must be fulfilled, Mark xiv. 49. Are we sure that Christ was truly dead? Yes: for one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water, and he that saw it bare record, John xix. 34, 35. Did Christ die as a martyr? Yes: for before Pontius Pilate he witnessed a good confession, 1 Tim. vi. 13. Did he die as a testator? Yes: for where a testament is, there must needs be the death of the testator, Heb. ix. 16. Did he die as a sacrifice? Yes: Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7.

13. Was there honour done to Christ even in his sufferings? Yes: the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, Matt. xxvii. 51. And were some thereby convinced? Yes: they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God, Matt. xxvii. 54. Is the cross of Christ then a reproach to us? No: God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, Gal. vi. 14. Is it what we should all be acquainted with? Yes: I determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. And ought we to celebrate the praises of our crucified Saviour? Yes: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour, and glory, and blessing, Rev. v. 12.

14. When Christ was dead, was he buried? Yes: they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre, Acts xiii. 29. Was he buried according to the custom? Yes: as the manner of the Jews is to bury, John xix. 40. Did he continue under the power of death for a time? Yes: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, Matt. xii. 40. Was this his descent into hell? Yes: he descended into the lower parts of the earth, Eph. iv. 9. Did his separate soul go to paradise? Yes: This day shalt thou be with me in paradise, Luke xxiii. 43. Did his body see corruption? No: Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption, Acts ii. 27.

Q. 28. *Wherein consists Christ's exaltation?*

A. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

1. Is Jesus Christ exalted? Yes: because he humbled himself, therefore God also hath highly exalted him, Phil. ii. 9. Was his humiliation the way to exaltation? Yes: he suffered these things, and so entered into his glory, Luke xxiv. 26. Was his exaltation the reward of his humiliation? Yes: I have glorified thee on the earth, and now, O Father, glorify thou me, John xvii. 5. Had he it in his eye in his sufferings? Yes: for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, Heb. xii. 2.

2. Was his resurrection the first step of his exaltation? Yes: he was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 1 Cor. xv. 4. Did he continue always in the bands of death? No: for it was impossible he should be holden of them, Acts ii. 24. Did he rise to life? Yes: he both rose and revived, Rom. xiv. 9. Did the same body rise? Yes: Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself, Luke xxiv. 39. Is he the same Jesus still? Yes: I am he that liveth, and was dead, Rev. i. 18. Did he lie in the grave all the Jewish sabbath? Yes: for he rose in the end of the sabbath, Matt. xxviii. 1. Did he rise the same day of the week? Yes: as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Matt. xxviii. 1. Have we sufficient proof of his resurrection? Yes: he showed himself alive, by many infallible proofs, Acts i. 3. Did he rise to die no more? Yes: Death hath no more dominion over him, Rom. vi. 9.

3. Did Christ rise by his own power? Yes: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, John ii. 19. and x. 18. Was that a divine power? Yes: for he was crucified through weakness, but he lived by the power of God, 2 Cor. xiii. 4. Was it the great proof of his being the Son of God? Yes: he was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, Rom. i. 4. Was it the will of the Father he should rise? Yes: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone, Matt. xxviii. 2. Did the Father raise him? Yes: God raised him from the dead, Acts xiii. 30. Was this an evidence of the acceptance of his satisfaction? Yes: for he was raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 25. And we may plead it? Yes: It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, Rom. viii. 34.

4. Did Christ rise as a public person? Yes: for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead, 1 Cor. xv. 21. Are true believers raised with him to a spiritual life? Yes: he hath quickened us together with Christ, Eph. ii. 5. And shall they be shortly raised to eternal life? Yes: Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming, 1 Cor. xv. 23. Is the resurrection of Christ one of the great foundations of Christianity? Yes: if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, *v.* 14.

5. Did Christ stay on earth forty days after his resurrection? Yes: he was seen of them forty days, Acts i. 3. Did he then ascend up into heaven? Yes: while he blessed them he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, Luke xxiv. 51. Did he ascend in a cloud? Yes: a cloud received him out of their sight, Acts i. 9. Was he welcome in heaven? Yes: when the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, he came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, Dan. vii. 13.

6. Was it for our advantage that he ascended up into heaven? Yes: It is expedient for you that I go away, John xvi. 7. Did he ascend as a conqueror? Yes: when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, Eph. iv. 8. Did he ascend as our forerunner? Yes: as the forerunner he is for us entered, Heb. vi. 20. Is he gone to prepare a place for us? Yes: I go to prepare a place for you, John xiv. 2. Did he enter as our High Priest within the veil? Yes: by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, Heb. ix. 12.

7. Did he sit at the right hand of God? Yes: he is seated on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, Heb. viii. 1. Has he authority to sit there? Yes: The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Ps. cx. 1. Is he there now? Yes: he is even at the right hand of God, Rom. viii. 34. Has he been seen there? Yes: Stephen said, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, Acts vii. 56. Will he continue there? Yes: the heavens must receive him till the restitution of all things, Acts iii. 21. Has he the highest honour there? Yes: God hath given him a name above every name, Phil. ii. 9. Has he the sovereign power there? Yes: for angels, authorities, and powers are made subject to him, 1 Pet. iii. 22. Is he Lord of all there? Yes: Thou crownest him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands, Heb. ii. 7. Ought we therefore to have our hearts in heaven? Yes: Seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God, Col. iii. 1.

8. Will Christ come again? Yes: If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, John xiv. 3. Are you sure he will come again? Yes: for he said, Surely I come quickly, Rev. xxii. 20. Will he come in glory? Yes: he shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, Matt. xxiv. 30. Will his angels attend him? Yes: he shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, Matt. xxv. 31. Will he come publicly? Yes: Behold he comes in the clouds, and every eye shall see him, Rev. i. 7.

9. Will Christ come to judge the world? Yes: God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained, Acts xvii. 31. Will he come to the terror of all his enemies? Yes: they also which pierced him shall wail because of him, Rev. i. 7. Will he come to the comfort of all his faithful followers? Yes: to them that look for him, he will appear the second time unto salvation, Heb. ix. 28. Will this be at the last day? Yes: I will raise him up at the last day, John vi. 39. Ought we to wait for that day? Yes: looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Tit. ii. 13.

Q. 29. *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his Holy Spirit.

1. Is redemption purchased by Christ? Yes: he obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb. ix. 12. Is he then the Author of it? Yes: he became the Author of salvation, Heb. v. 9. Is it redemption by price? Yes: Ye are bought with a price, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Is it a redemption by power? Yes: for he hath led captivity captive, Ps. lxviii. 18. Is this redemption offered to all? Yes: he hath proclaimed liberty to the captives, Isa. lxi. 1. May all that will take the benefit of it? Yes: Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, Isa. lv. 1. Have all the world therefore some benefit by it? Yes: Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, Mark xvi. 15. But have all the world a like benefit by it? No: Thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world, John xiv. 22.

2. Is it enough for us that there is a redemption purchased? No: for there are those who deny the Lord who bought them, 2 Pet. ii. 1. Is it enough to hear of it? No: for to some it is a savour of death unto death, 2 Cor. ii. 16. Is it enough to have a name among the redeemed? No: Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead, Rev. iii. 1. Is it necessary therefore that we be partakers of the redemption? Yes: that we may say, Who loved me, and gave himself for me, Gal. ii. 20. Do all partake of it? No: Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, Acts viii. 21. Do all believers partake of it? Yes: We are made partakers of Christ, Heb. ii. 14. Do they receive the Redeemer? Yes: We have received Christ Jesus the Lord, Col. ii. 6. Do any receive this of themselves? No: A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above, John iii. 27.

3. Must the redemption be applied to us? Yes: It is Christ in you the hope of glory, Col. i. 27. Is it the Spirit's work to apply it? Yes: for it is the Spirit that quickens, John vi. 63. Is he sent for that purpose? Yes: He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you, John xvi. 15. Is he sent in Christ's name? Yes: He is the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, John xiv. 26. Have we as much need of

the Spirit to apply the redemption to us, as of the Son to purchase it for us? Yes: for when Christ had purchased it, it was expedient for us he should go away, that he might send the Comforter, John xvi. 7.

4. Is the Spirit given to the church in general? Yes: Another Comforter shall abide with you for ever, John xiv. 16. Is he promised to particular persons? Yes: Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, Prov. i. 23. Are we to pray for the Spirit then? Yes: our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, Luke xi. 13. Do all believers receive of the Spirit? Yes: God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, Gal. iv. 6. Is he their teacher? Yes: he shall teach them all things. Is he their remembrancer? Yes: he shall bring all things to their remembrance, John xiv. 26. Is he the earnest? Yes: he hath given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, 2 Cor. i. 22. Does he begin the good work of grace in the heart? Yes: for when he is come, he shall convince, John xvi. 8. And does he perfect it? Yes: for he hath wrought us for the self-same thing, 2 Cor. v. 5.

Q. 30. *How does the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. The Spirit applies to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ in our effectual calling?

1. Does the Spirit act freely in applying the redemption? Yes: The wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit, John iii. 8. Does he act mysteriously? Yes: Thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, Eccl. xi. 15. Does he act effectually? Yes: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, John vi. 37.

2. Is faith necessary to our interest in the redemption? Yes: for without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. Is it the great thing necessary? Yes: only believe, all things are possible to him that can believe, Mark v. 36. and ix. 23. Can we have a saving interest in the redemption without faith? No: he that believeth not, is condemned already, John iii. 18. Is it that which is required on our part? Yes: by grace ye are saved through faith. And is it of ourselves? No: not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8. Is it given for Christ's sake? Yes: Unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe on him, Phil. i. 29.

3. Does the Spirit work faith in us? Yes: it is the faith of the operation of God, Col ii. 12. Is it a divine work then? Yes: this is the work of God, that ye believe, John vi. 29. Is it a work of divine power? Yes: we believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, Eph. i. 19, 20. Is it wrought in all the saints? Yes: for they have all obtained a like precious faith, 2 Pet. i. 1. Shall it be wrought in all the chosen? Yes: for it is the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1.

4. Are all true believers united to Christ? Yes: He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. Are they interested in his death? Yes: We are crucified with Christ, Gal. ii. 20. And in his burial? Yes: We are buried with him in baptism, Rom. vi. 4. And in his resurrection? Yes: He has quickened us together with Christ, Eph. ii. 5. And in his ascension? Yes: He has made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6.

5. Is there a real union between Christ and believers? Yes: for both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one, Heb. ii. 11. Is he the Head? Yes: he is the Head of the body, the church, Col. i. 18. Are they his members? Yes: Who are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. Is he the Root? Yes: for of his fulness have all we received, John i. 16. Are they the branches? Yes: I am the vine, ye are the branches, John xv. 5. Is he the Foundation? Yes: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, Isa. xxviii. 16. Are they built upon him? Yes: Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

6. Is there a relative union between Christ and believers? Yes: I ascend to my Father and your Father, John xx. 17. Are they his children? Yes: Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me, Heb. ii. 13. Are they his brethren? Yes: he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb. ii. 11, 12 Are they his spouse? Yes: I have espoused you to one husband, 2 Cor. xi. 2. Are they his subjects? Yes: they are translated into the kingdom of his dear Son, Col. i. 13. Are they his soldiers? Yes: good soldiers of Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. ii. 3. Are they his servants? Yes: Ye call me Master and Lord, John xiii. 13. Are they his scholars? Yes: they sit at Jesus' feet and hear his word, Luke x. 39. Are they his sheep? Yes: for he is the great Shepherd of the sheep, Heb. xiii. 20.

7. Is it by faith that we are united to Christ? Yes: for Christ dwells in the heart by faith, Eph. iii. 17. Is that owing to the Spirit? Yes: we are a habitation of God through the Spirit, Eph. ii. 22. Does communion result from this union? Yes: for truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John i. 3. And is that owing to the Spirit? Yes: we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father, Eph. ii. 18. Can we be united to Christ without the indwelling of the Spirit? No: for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, Rom. viii. 9. Have all that are united to Christ an interest in the benefits of redemption? Yes: for of him are we in Christ Jesus, who

of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30.

8. Are we united to Christ in our effectual calling? Yes: for we are called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, 1 Cor. i. 9. Will the common call unite us to Christ? No: for many are called, but few are chosen, Matt. xxii. 14. Is it the effectual call then that does it? Yes: for whom he called, them he justified, Rom. viii. 30.

9. Does the gospel call us from sin to God? Yes: it turns from the power of Satan unto God, Acts xxvi. 18. Does it call us from self to Christ? Yes: If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and follow me, Matt. xvi. 24. Does it call us from darkness to light? Yes: He hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And from uncleanness to holiness? Yes: God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness, 1 Thess. iv. 7. And from this world to the other? Yes: If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, Col. iii. 1. Is this call effectual when we come at the call? Yes: Follow me, and he arose and followed him, Matt. ix. 9. Is it our great concern to make this sure? Yes: Make your calling and your election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10.

Q. 31. *What is effectual calling?*

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

1. Is the common call given to the world? Yes: he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden, Matt. xxii. 3. Can ministers make that call effectual? No: for who hath believed our report, Isa. liii. 1. Is it the work of God to make it effectual? Yes: for it is God that giveth the increase, 1 Cor. iii. 7. Does he do it in a way suitable to our nature? Yes: I drew them with cords of a man, Hos. xi. 4. Is it necessary to our salvation, that the call should be effectual? Yes: Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, 2 Tim. i. 9.

2. Are all who are effectually called convinced of sin? Yes: I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, Rom. vii. 9. Is it the Spirit's work to convince? Yes: when he is come he will convince the world of sin, John xvi. 8. Is the word the ordinary means of conviction? Yes: for by the law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. iii. 20. Is it necessary we should be convinced of sin? Yes: for they that are whole, need not a physician, Matt. ix. 12. Must we be convinced of the fact of sin? Yes: These things thou hast done, Ps. l. 21. And of the fault of sin? Yes: Know therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing, Jer. ii. 19. And of the folly of sin? Yes: Herein thou hast done foolishly, 2 Chron. xvi. 9. And of the filth of sin? Yes: For how canst thou say, I am not polluted? Jer. ii. 23. And of the fruit of sin? Yes: Your sins have separated between you and your God, Isa. lix. 1, 2. And of the fountain of sin? Yes: They shall know every man the plague of his own heart, 1 Kings viii. 38.

3. Must we also be convinced of our misery? Yes: Thou art wretched and miserable, Rev. iii. 17. And of our danger? Yes: Flee from the wrath to come, Matt. iii. 7. Must we be convinced of our helplessness in ourselves? Yes: when sin revived I died, Rom. vii. 9. And of the possibility of our being helped by the grace of God? Yes: How many hired servants of my father have bread enough, and to spare! Luke xv. 17. Will these convictions put us in pain? Yes: When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, Acts ii. 37. And bring us to be at a loss within ourselves? Yes: Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts ii. 37. And put us upon inquiry? Yes: They shall ask the way to Sion with their faces thitherward, Jer. l. 5. Are these convictions necessary to prepare us for an invitation to Christ? Yes: Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, Matt. xi. 28.

4. Does the Spirit, when he has convinced us of sin and misery, leave us so? No: for he has torn, and he will heal us, Hos. vi. 1. When he has showed us our wound, does he show us our remedy? Yes: O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help, Hos. xiii. 9. Does he enlighten our minds? Yes: the Spirit of wisdom and revelation is given, that the eyes of our understanding may be enlightened, Eph. i. 17, 18. Does he enlighten them with the knowledge of Christ? Yes: he gives the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Does he discover to the soul Christ's ability to save? Yes: I have laid help upon one that is mighty, Ps. lxxxix. 19. And his willingness to save? Yes: I will, be thou clean, Matt. viii. 3. Should we be most ambitious of the knowledge of Christ? Yes: counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, Phil. iii. 8. Does the Spirit direct convinced sinners to Christ? Yes: Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, Zech. ix. 12.

5. Is it enough to have the mind enlightened? No: for we are called into a professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. ix. 13. Must the will therefore be renewed? Yes: for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13. Is it the work of the Spirit to incline the will to do that which is good? Yes: Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, Ps. cxix. 36. And is that the renewing of the will? Yes: A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Does that make the will pliable? Yes: I will take the stony heart out

of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh, Ezek. xi. 19. Does it bring it into subjection to the will of God? Yes: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Acts ix. 6. And is that a cheerful subjection? Yes: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Rom. v. 5.

6. Is Christ offered to us in the gospel? Yes: Behold, I stand at the door and knock, Rev. iii. 20. Is he freely offered? Yes: Come buy, without money, and without price, Isa. lv. 1. Are we concerned to embrace that offer? Yes: Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled, Prov. ix. 5. Are we by nature averse to it? Yes: Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life, John v. 40. Do sinners perish then through their own wilfulness? Yes: I have called, and ye have refused, Prov. i. 24. Does the Spirit in effectual calling overcome this aversion? Yes: With loving kindness have I drawn thee, Jer. xxxi. 3. Does he persuade us to embrace this offer? Yes: For every man that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me, John vi. 45. Does he enable us? Yes: For you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1.

7. Can we turn to God by any power of our own? No: for we are not sufficient of ourselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Is it the grace of God that turns us to him? Yes: Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, Jer. xxxi. 18. Is it free grace? Yes: He went on frowardly in the way of his heart, I have seen his ways, and will heal him, Isa. lvii. 17, 18. Does it turn us by a work upon the will? Yes: The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, Acts xvi. 14. Is it special grace? Yes: It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy, Rom. ix. 16. Shall this grace be given to all the elect? Yes: All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me, John vi. 37. Shall it be effectual? Yes: His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain, 1 Cor. xv. 10. May we in faith pray for this grace? Yes: I will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Can any turn to God without this special grace? No: For no man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him, John vi. 44. Must that grace therefore have all the glory? Yes: we must show forth the praises of him that hath called us, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

Q. 32. *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

1. Are all those happy which are effectually called? Yes: for God hath called us to his kingdom and glory, 1 Thess. ii. 12. Are they partakers of the blessings of the new covenant? Yes: for the promise is sure to all the seed, Rom. iv. 16. Are they happy even in this life? Yes: For after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, Eph. i. 13.

2. Are they dignified and preferred? Yes: Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Are they brought near? Yes: Ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh, Eph. ii. 13. Are they enriched? Yes: God hath called the poor in this world rich in faith, Jam. ii. 5. Are they taken into the communion of saints? Yes: for we are come to the church of the first-born which are written in heaven, Heb. xii. 23. And into communion with the holy angels? Yes: for we are come to an innumerable company of angels, Heb. xii. 22. Are they entitled to the best possessions? Yes: All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, 1 Cor. iii. 22. Are they happy in the best blessings? Yes: The God and Father of our Lord Jesus hath blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly things, Eph. i. 3. Are they happy both for soul and body? Yes: He hath given us all things that pertain to life and godliness, 2 Pet. i. 3.

3. Are they justified? Yes: whom he called, them he justified, Rom. viii. 30. Is that an unspeakable benefit? Yes: blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, Ps. xxxii. 1. Are they adopted? Yes: for he hath predestinated us to the adoption of children, Eph. i. 5. And is that an unspeakable benefit? Yes: for if children, then heirs, Rom. viii. 17. Are they sanctified? Yes: they are sanctified in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. i. 2. And is that an unspeakable benefit? Yes: for we are partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10.

4. Do they partake of other benefits? Yes: The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Are all these benefits given to them that are effectually called? Yes: for the promise of the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, is to as many as the Lord our God shall call, Acts ii. 39. And shall every thing turn to their advantage? Yes: all things work together for good to them that are the called, Rom. viii. 28. Will you therefore make it sure that you are effectually called, by coming at the call? Yes: behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God, Jer. iii. 22.

Q. 33. *What is justification?*

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

1. Have we all need to be justified? Yes: for we are all guilty before God, Rom. iii. 19. Is it enough if we justify ourselves? No: If I justify

myself my own mouth shall condemn me, Job ix. 20. Is it enough if our neighbours justify us? No: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God, Luke xvi. 15. Must it be God's act then? Yes: It is God that justifieth, Rom. viii. 33. And his only? Yes: for none can forgive sins but God only, Mark ii. 7. And is it an act of free grace? Yes: we are justified freely by his grace, Rom. iii. 24.

2. Are all that are justified discharged from the sentence of the law? Yes: for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1. Have they their sins pardoned? Yes; we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, Eph. i. 7. Does God forgive them? Yes: I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, Isa. xliii. 25.

3. When God forgives sin does he forgive all? Yes: Having forgiven all your trespasses, Col. ii. 13. Does he forgive even great sins? Yes: Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, Isa. i. 18. Does he forgive many sins? Yes: He will abundantly pardon, Isa. lv. 7. Does he forgive freely? Yes: I will be merciful to their unrighteousness. Does he forgive fully? Yes: Their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more, Heb. viii. 12. Is he forward to forgive? Yes: I said I will confess, and thou forgavest, Ps. xxxii. 5. Does he forgive and forget? Yes: Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea, Mic. vii. 19.

4. Is forgiveness of sins offered to all upon gospel terms? Yes: for repentance and remission of sins is preached to all nations, Luke xxiv. 47. Is it secured to all the chosen remnant? Yes: for Christ is exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins, Acts v. 31. Have all believers their sins pardoned? Yes: through him all that believe are justified, Acts xiii. 39. Are they accepted in God's sight? Yes: he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, Eph. i. 6. Are they accepted as righteous? Yes: for we are made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21. May those that have been ungodly be thus justified? Yes: he justifies the ungodly, Rom. iv. 5.

5. Can we be justified by the covenant of innocency? No: for who can say, I have made my heart clean? Prov. xx. 9. Can we be justified by any thing in ourselves? No: How can men be justified with God? Job xxv. 4. If we know no ill by ourselves will that justify us? No: though I know nothing by myself, yet am I not thereby justified, 1 Cor. iv. 4. Will the law of Moses justify us? No: we are justified from all those things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses, Acts xiii. 39. Will our own works justify us? No: by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified, Rom. iii. 20. Would the ceremonial sacrifices justify men? No: they could not make the comers thereunto perfect, Heb. x. 1. Are we justified for the righteousness of Christ? Yes: By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous, Rom. v. 19. And for that only? Yes: Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, Phil. iii. 9.

6. Is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us for our justification? Yes: for he is made of God unto us righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. Did Christ die that it might be imputed? Yes: He shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities, Isa. liii. 11. Do we owe our justification then to the death of Christ? Yes: the blood of Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, 1 John i. 7. And does that lay the foundation of our salvation? Yes: being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath, Rom. v. 9. Were we justified from eternity? No: for in due time Christ died for the ungodly, Rom. v. 9. If Christ had died, and not risen again, could he have justified us? No: for he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 25. Is that then our plea for peace and pardon? Yes: for who then is he that shall condemn? Rom. viii. 34. May we then depend upon Christ for righteousness? Yes: In the Lord I have righteousness and strength, Isa. xlv. 24. Is it become an act of justice in God to pardon sin upon the account of Christ's righteousness? Yes: for he is just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, Rom. iii. 26. 1 John i. 9.

7. Are we to receive the righteousness of Christ? Yes: We have now received the atonement, Rom. v. 11. Do we receive it by faith? Yes: through his name; whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins, Acts x. 43. And by faith only? Yes: for being justified by faith we have peace with God, Rom. v. 1. Did Christ's death satisfy the law? Yes: for Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, Gal. iii. 13. Is that then our only righteousness in the law court? Yes: for we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Rom. v. 10. Do we by true faith come up to the terms of the gospel? Yes: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, Acts xvi. 31. Is that then our righteousness in the gospel court? Yes: for to him that believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness, Rom. iv. 5. Is it therefore our life? Yes: for the just shall live by his faith, Hab. ii. 4. Is it so as it applies Christ's righteousness? Yes: This is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6.

8. Is justifying faith a working faith? Yes: for by works is faith made perfect, Jam. ii. 22. And will that faith justify us which does not produce good works? No: for by works a man is justified, and not by faith only, Jam. ii. 24. Is faith then dead without good works? Yes: for as the body

without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also, Jam. ii. 26. And are good works dead without faith? Yes: for without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6. Must they both act together then? Yes: for that which avails is faith, which works by love, Gal. v. 6. Do we then make void the law through faith? No: God forbid, yea, we establish the law, Rom. iii. 31. Is our faith our own? No: it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8. Are our good works our own? No: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us, Isa. xxvi. 12. Is any room left for boasting then? No: it is excluded by the law of faith, Rom. iii. 27. Must God therefore have all the glory? Yes: for by the grace of God I am what I am, 1 Cor. xv. 10.

Q. 34. *What is adoption?*

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

1. Are all believers God's children? Yes: Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, Gal. iii. 26. Are they so by nature? No: We are by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. Are they so by adoption? Yes: We receive the adoption of sons, Gal. iv. 5. Do they deserve to be made God's children? No: How shall I put thee among the children, and give thee a pleasant land? Jer. iii. 19. Are they altogether unworthy of such a favour? Yes: I am no more worthy to be called thy son, Luke xv. 19. Is it bestowed upon them notwithstanding their unworthiness? Yes: I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, 2 Cor. vi. 18.

2. Is adoption an act of God's free grace? Yes: Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, 1 John iii. 1. Are we by it received into the number of God's children? Yes: There shall they be called the children of the living God, Rom. ix. 26. Are we received into that number upon our believing? Yes: As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name, John i. 12.

3. Have we leave to call God, Father? Yes: Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father, Rom. viii. 15. Does he encourage us to do so? Yes: Thou shalt call me, My Father, and shalt not turn away from me, Jer. iii. 19. May we call him so, though we have been prodigals? Yes: I will go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, Luke xv. 18. May we look upon all good Christians as our brethren? Yes: For all ye are brethren, Matt. xxiii. 8. And do they all make one family? Yes: Of whom the whole family both in heaven and earth is named, Eph. iii. 15.

4. Does God give the nature of his children to all whom he receives into the number? Yes: Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, Gal. iv. 6. Do they partake of a divine nature? Yes: they are made partakers of a divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. Are all God's children born again then? Yes: they are born not of the will of man, but of God, John i. 13. Is our adoption then to be known by our disposition? Yes: for in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil, whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, 1 John iii. 10.

5. Have all God's adopted children a right to the privileges of children? Yes: they are brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, Rom. viii. 21. Does their Father pity them? Yes: like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him, Ps. ciii. 13. Does he spare them? Yes: as a man spares his own son that serves him, Mal. iii. 17. Does he take care of them? Yes: Children, have ye any meat? John xxi. 15. Does he provide for them? Yes: for they that seek the Lord shall want no good thing, Ps. xxxiv. 10. Does he correct them in love? Yes: For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? Heb. xii. 7. Does he hear their prayers? Yes: Your Father in heaven will give good things to them that ask him, Matt. vii. 11. Will he give them the inheritance of sons? Yes: It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, Luke xii. 32. Will he bring them all safe to it? Yes: He will gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad, John xi. 52. Will Christ present them all to the Father? Yes: Behold, I and the children which thou hast given me, Heb. ii. 13.

6. Must all God's children reverence him? Yes: If I be a Father, where is my honour? Mal. i. 6. Must they obey him? Yes: as obedient children, 1 Pet. i. 14. Must they imitate him? Yes: Be ye followers of God, as dear children, Eph. v. 1. Must they submit to him? Yes: Father, thy will be done, Matt. xxvi. 42.

Q. 35. *What is sanctification?*

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

1. Are all that are justified sanctified? Yes: for Jesus Christ is made both righteousness and sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. Is it necessary they should be so? Yes: for without holiness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. Did Christ die that they might be sanctified? Yes: For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified, John xvii. 19. And was this the intention of their election? Yes: He hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification, 2 Thess. ii. 13.

2. Is sanctification the work of God? Yes: We are sanctified by God the Father, Jude 1. Is it the

work of the Spirit of God? Yes: it is sanctification of the Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 2. Is it a work of free grace? Yes: according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, Tit. iii. 5. Is it a work wrought in us? Yes: for we are his workmanship, created unto good works, Eph. ii. 10.

3. Is sanctification something more than being civilized? Yes: for he is not a Jew, that is one outwardly, Rom. ii. 28. Is it more than being baptized? Yes: it is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Is it an inward change of the heart? Yes: we must be renewed in the spirit of our mind, Eph. iv. 23. Is it the renovation of the whole man? Yes: if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. Will it suffice to have a new name? No: For thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead, Rev. iii. 1. Will it suffice to have a new face? No: for there are those that have the form of godliness, but deny the power of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Must there be a new heart? Yes: A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. And a new nature? Yes: Put on the new man, Eph. iv. 24. And a new birth? Yes: Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, John iii. 3.

4. Must we be cleansed from sin? Yes: From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Must we be consecrated to God? Yes: for we are the temple of God, 1 Cor. iii. 16. Must the law be written in the heart? Yes: I will put my law in their heart, Heb. viii. 10. Must the understanding be enlightened? Yes: Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayst see, Rev. iii. 18. Must the heart be softened? Yes: I will take away the stony heart, and give a heart of flesh, Ezek. xi. 19. Must the will be bowed? Yes: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Acts ix. 6. Must the affections be made spiritual? Yes: Set your affections on things above, Col. iii. 2. Must the body also be an instrument of holiness? Yes: Present your bodies a living sacrifice, Rom. xii. 1.

5. Must we be renewed after the image of God? Yes: Put on the new man, which is renewed after the image of him that created him, Col. iii. 10. And after the pattern of Christ? Yes: for Christ must be formed in us, Gal. iv. 19. Is sin mortified in all that are sanctified? Yes: they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, Gal. v. 24. Is grace planted in them? Yes: there is a well of water springing up to eternal life, John iv. 14. Is this work perfect at first? No: it is first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, Mark iv. 28.

6. Do all that are sanctified die unto sin? Yes: Reckon ye yourselves dead unto sin, Rom. vi. 11. Do they live unto righteousness? Yes: being dead to sin, we live unto righteousness, 1 Pet. ii. 24. Are they enabled to do so? Yes: for it is through the Spirit that we mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 13. And is the course of their conversation accordingly? Yes: they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. viii. 1. Is it our duty to submit to the Spirit as a sanctifier? Yes: Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the works of the flesh, Gal. v. 16. And is the grace of God promised us for this purpose? Yes: Sin shall not have dominion over you, Rom. vi. 14.

Q. 36. *What are the benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?*

A. The benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

1. Are they that are justified happy in this life? Yes: for being justified by faith, we have peace with God, Rom. v. 1. And are they so that are adopted? Yes: Beloved, now are we the sons of God, 1 John iii. 2. And are they so that are sanctified? Yes: for to the pure all things are pure, Tit. i. 15.

2. May they have an assurance of God's love? Yes: Ye know that ye have eternal life, 1 John v. 13. Is the Spirit the author of that assurance? Yes: the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, Rom. viii. 16. Is it wrought by evidences? Yes: hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments, 1 John ii. 3. Do all believers attain this assurance? No: some walk in darkness, and have no light, Isa. l. 10. But should they labour after it? Yes: Show the same diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the end, Heb. vi. 11. And is it an unspeakable comfort? Yes: for the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost, Rom. v. 5. And is it just cause for triumph? Yes: I know whom I have believed, 2 Tim. i. 12.

3. Is peace of conscience a precious privilege? Yes: for if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, 1 John iii. 21. Is it the fruit of grace? Yes: for the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever, Isa. xxxii. 17. Has Christ left it as a legacy to his disciples? Yes: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, John xiv. 27. Can those who are unjustified have this peace? No: There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked, Isa. lvii. 21. Should those that are justified labour after it? Yes: Return to thy rest, O my soul, Ps. cxvi. 7. Should this peace govern us? Yes: Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, Col. iii. 15. And will it preserve us? Yes: The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds, Phil. iv. 7. And will it be our comfort in the day

of evil? Yes: our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12. Is it therefore our interest to secure it? Yes: Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence, Acts xxiv. 16.

4. May those who are justified have joy in the Holy Ghost? Yes: for believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8. Have they cause for joy? Yes: for gladness is sown for the upright in heart, Ps. xcvii. 11. Is it their duty to rejoice? Yes: Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice, Phil. iv. 4. Is it their interest to rejoice? Yes: for the joy of the Lord is their strength, Neh. viii. 10. May they rejoice in all conditions: Yes: for we glory in tribulations also, Rom. v. 3. And is this a superlative joy? Yes: it is gladness in the heart more than in the time that their corn and wine increased, Ps. iv. 7.

5. Is grace growing? Yes: He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger, Job xvii. 9. Is it so in its nature? Yes: for it is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto the perfect day, Prov. iv. 18. Is it our duty to grow in grace? Yes: Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. iii. 18. And may we rest in what we have attained? No: but press forward towards the mark, Phil. iii. 14. Is it promised to all believers that they shall grow? Yes: for to him that hath shall be given, Matt. xxv. 29. Will the grace of God make them grow? Yes: I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall grow as the lily, Hos. xiv. 5.

6. Shall true believers persevere to the end? Yes: for he that hath begun a good work will perform it, Phil. i. 6. Will hypocrites persevere? No: these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away, Luke viii. 13. Does it appear by their apostasy that they never were sincere? Yes: They went out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, 1 John ii. 19. But shall any that are justified finally fall away? No: for whom he justified, them he glorified, Rom. viii. 30. Is every fall a falling away? No: for though he falls he shall not be utterly cast down, Ps. xxxvii. 24. May the appearances of grace be lost? Yes: From him shall be taken away even that which he seemed to have, Luke viii. 18. But can true grace be finally lost? No: it is that good part which shall never be taken away, Luke x. 42. Will God recal his gifts? No: the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, Rom. xi. 29. Will he secure them? Yes: we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. i. 5. and v. 7. Is the perseverance of the saints secured by the divine power? Yes: No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands, John x. 29. And by the divine providence? Yes: for he will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, 1 Cor. x. 13. And by the divine grace? Yes: I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me, Jer. xxxii. 40. And by the intercession of Christ? Yes: I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, Luke xxii. 32. And by the indwelling of the Spirit? Yes: The anointing which you have received, abideth in you, 1 John ii. 27. And by the stability of the promise? Yes: My covenant will I not break, Ps. lxxxix. 34. May they be secure then? No: Be not high-minded, but fear, Rom. xi. 20. But may they be encouraged? Yes: He will preserve me to his heavenly kingdom, 2 Tim. iv. 18.

Q. 37. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at death?*

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

1. Is the happiness of believers confined to this present life? No: if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable, 1 Cor. xv. 19. Is the best of their happiness in this life? No: for in the world ye shall have tribulation, John xvi. 33. Must they die as well as others? Yes: it is appointed unto men once to die, Heb. ix. 27. Must the best and most useful die? Yes: the righteous perisheth, and merciful men are taken away, Isa. lvii. 1. Ought they then to wait for it? Yes: All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come, Job xiv. 14. And to prepare for it? Yes: Therefore be ye also ready, Matt. xxiv. 44.

2. Is death loss to a good Christian? No: for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, Phil. i. 21. Should it therefore be a terror? No: for the righteous hath hope in his death, Prov. xiv. 32. Does God take special care of the death of his people? Yes: for precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints, Ps. cxvi. 15. Is death in the covenant? Yes: All is yours, whether life or death, 1 Cor. iii. 22. Can it separate them from the love of God? No: neither death nor life can do that, Rom. viii. 38.

3. Are believers perfect in holiness in this life? No: I have not yet attained, neither am already perfect, Phil. iii. 12. Are their souls made perfect at death? Yes: the spirits of just men are made perfect, Heb. xii. 23. Are they delivered from sin? Yes: he that is dead is freed from sin, Rom. vi. 7. Are they made perfect in knowledge? Yes: Then shall I know, even as also I am known, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. And perfect in holiness? Yes; for they are come to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13. Might

they pass into glory without being made perfect in holiness? No: for corruption cannot inherit incorruption, 1 Cor. xv. 50. Being made perfect in holiness, are they confirmed in it? Yes: He that is holy, let him be holy still, Rev. xxii. 11.

4. Do the souls of believers at death sleep with their bodies? No: for when we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 8. Do they go to Christ? Yes: Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, Phil. i. 23. And will he receive them? Yes: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, Acts vii. 59. Shall they be where he is? Yes: That where I am there ye may be also, John xiv. 3. Will they be with him in heaven? Yes: We have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v. 1. Do they pass into this glory at death? Yes: That when ye fail ye may be received into everlasting habitations, Luke xvi. 9. Do they immediately pass into it? Yes: This day shalt thou be with me in paradise, Luke xxiii. 43. Are they guarded by angels thither? Yes: He was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. Are they happy then in their death? Yes: Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, Rev. xiv. 13. Happier than in life? Yes: The day of their death is better than the day of their birth, Eccl. vii. 1. And is their end peace? Yes: Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace, Ps. xxxvii. 37.

5. Is death gain to the wicked man? No: for when a wicked man dies, his expectation shall perish, Prov. xi. 7. Is it therefore a terror to the wicked? Yes: This night thy soul shall be required of thee, Luke xii. 20. Do the souls of the wicked at death go into torment? Yes: The rich man died, and was buried, and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, Luke xvi. 22, 23. Do they go away under the guilt of their sins? Yes: If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins, John viii. 24. Is it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God? Yes: for our God is a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29. Are the souls of believers distinguished from them? Yes: But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, Ps. xlix. 15.

6. Are the bodies of believers well provided for at death? Yes: for the Lord is for the body, 1 Cor. vi. 13. May they be cheerfully committed to the grave? Yes: My flesh also shall rest in hope, Ps. xvi. 9. Do they still remain united to Christ? Yes: for they sleep in Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14. Do they rest in their graves? Yes: for there the weary be at rest, Job iii. 17. Is the grave a good Christian's bed? Yes: He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, Isa. lvii. 2. May the saints triumph over the grave then? Yes: O grave, where is thy victory? 1 Cor. xv. 55. And need they to fear no evil in it? No: for the sucking child shall play upon the hole of the asp, Isa. xi. 8. Are all who are regenerate delivered from the second death? Yes: Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death shall have no power, Rev. xx. 6.

7. Shall the dead be raised again? Yes: there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, Acts xxiv. 15. Shall the same body be raised again? Yes: Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, Job xix. 26. Shall it be done by the power of Christ? Yes: for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive, 1 Cor. xv. 22. Shall there be a vast difference between the godly and the wicked at the resurrection? Yes: for some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. xii. 2. Has Christ himself assured us of this? Yes: the hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of condemnation, John v. 28, 29. Is it certain when this shall be? Yes: for he hath appointed a day, Acts xvii. 31. But is it known to us? No: for of that day and hour knoweth no man, Mark xiii. 32.

Q. 38. *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

A. At the resurrection, believers being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

1. Shall the dead bodies of believers be raised? Yes: For the dead shall be raised, 1 Cor. xv. 52. Is it possible that the same body should return to life again? Yes: Why should it seem a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead? Acts xxvi. 8. Is it certain that they shall be raised? Yes: for if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen, 1 Cor. xv. 13. Has Christ undertaken for the resurrection of believers? Yes: I am the resurrection and the life, John xi. 25. Are they in error who deny it? Yes: Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God, Matt. xxii. 29.

2. Shall the believer's body be raised up in glory? Yes: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory, 1 Cor. xv. 43. Shall it be the glory of Christ's glorified body? Yes: he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. Shall they be raised by virtue of their union with Christ? Yes: Together with my dead body shall they arise, Isa. xxvi. 19. Shall they be raised to such a life as we now live? No: for in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, Matt. xxii. 30. Shall they be raised to an immortal life? Yes: for this mortal must put on immortality, 1 Cor. xv. 53. Shall they

that are found alive be changed? Yes: Behold, I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51.

3. Shall all the saints at that day be brought to Jesus Christ? Yes: at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ there shall be a gathering together unto him, 2 Thess. ii. 1. Shall they be separated from the wicked? Yes: as the Shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats, Matt. xxv. 32. Shall all the saints be then together? Yes: for he shall gather his elect from the four winds, Matt. xxiv. 31. And none but saints? Yes: for he shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, Matt. xiii. 41. And saints made perfect? Yes: for then that which is perfect is come, 1 Cor. xiii. 10. Shall they attend upon Christ at his coming? Yes: Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, Jude 14. Shall they be assessors with him in his judgment? Yes: for the saints shall judge the world, 1 Cor. vi. 2.

4. Shall they be openly acknowledged in the day of judgment? Yes: Him will I confess before my Father which is in heaven, Matt. x. 32. Will God own them as his own? Yes: They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in that day when I make up my jewels, Mal. iii. 17. And will that be their honour? Yes: If any man serve me, him will my Father honour, John xii. 26. Shall they be openly acquitted? Yes: for their sins shall be blotted out when the times of refreshing come, Acts iii. 19.

5. Shall the wicked be condemned then? Yes: he shall say to them on his left hand, Depart from me. Shall they be sent away with a blessing? No: Depart ye cursed. Shall they go into a place of ease? No: into fire. Into ordinary fire? No: into fire prepared. Shall it be for a short time? No: but into everlasting fire. Shall they have good company? No: but the devil and his angels, Matt. xxv. 41. Will the salvation of the saints aggravate their condemnation? Yes: for they shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, Luke xiii. 28.

6. Shall the saints at the day of judgment be put in possession of eternal life? Yes: the righteous into life eternal, Matt. xxv. 46. Shall they be blest? Yes: Come, ye blessed of my Father, Matt. xxv. 34. Shall they be perfectly blessed? Yes: for in thy presence is fulness of joy, Ps. xvi. 11. Shall there be any sin in heaven? No: for they are as the angels of God in heaven, Matt. xxii. 30. Shall there be any sorrow there? No: for God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Rev. xxi. 4. Shall there be any dying there? No: there shall be no more death, Rev. xxi. 4.

7. Is heaven a place of rest? Yes: there remaineth a rest for the people of God, Heb. iv. 9. Is it light? Yes: it is the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. Is it honour? Yes: it is a crown of glory that fades not away, 1 Pet. v. 4. Is it wealth? Yes: it is an inheritance incorruptible, 1 Pet. i. 4. Is it joy? Yes: Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, Matt. xxv. 21.

8. Shall we in heaven see God? Yes: when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 John iii. 2. Shall we see him clearly? Yes: now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Shall we enjoy him? Yes: God himself shall be with them, and be their God, Rev. xxi. 3. Shall we be satisfied in the vision and fruition of God? Yes: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness, Ps. xvii. 15. Shall this be everlasting? Yes: So shall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 17.

9. Is this happiness purchased? Yes: it is the purchased possession, Eph. i. 14. Is it promised? Yes: it is eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised, Tit. i. 2. Is it sure to all good Christians? Yes: even the poor in the world, if rich in faith, are heirs of the kingdom, Jam. ii. 5. Should we not be solicitous that it may be sure with us? Yes: What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? Luke xviii. 18. Should we not then have it much in our eye? Yes: for we look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, 2 Cor. iv. 18. And should we not be comforted and encouraged with the prospect of it? Yes: for the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed, Rom. viii. 18.

Q. 39. *What is the duty which God requires of man?*

A. The duty which God requires of man is obedience to his revealed will.

1. Does God require duty of men? Yes: Now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, Deut. x. 12. Of every man? Yes: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear, Matt. xiii. 9. Has he authority to require duty? Yes: If I be a master, where is my fear? Mal. i. 6. Is it fit he should rule us? Yes: for we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture, Ps. c. 3. Is it fit we should obey him? Yes: for the borrower is servant to the lender, and the fool is servant to the wise in heart, Prov. xxii. 7. xi. 29. Ought we therefore to inquire what our duty is? Yes: Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, Ps. cxix. 33.

2. Has God made known his will concerning our duty? Yes: He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel, Ps. cxlvii. 19. Are we to obey it? Yes: Thou shalt obey the voice of the Lord thy God, and do his commandments, Deut. xxvii. 10. Is that obedience the condition of our acceptance? Yes: Obey my voice, and I will be your God, Jer. vii. 23. Is obedience to God reasonable? Yes: it is our reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. Is it easy? Yes: for his com-

mandments are not grievous, 1 John v. 3. And will it be acceptable? Yes: for to obey is better than sacrifice, 1 Sam. xv. 22.

3. Must our obedience to God be sincere? Yes: Fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity, and in truth, Josh xxiv. 14. Must it be universal? Yes: Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments, Ps. cxix. 6. Must it be with delight? Yes: I delight in the law of God after the inward man, Rom. vii. 22. Must it be constant? Yes: Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long, Prov. xxiii. 17. Must God's commands take place of men's? Yes: We ought to obey God rather than man, Acts v. 29. and iv. 19.

4. Should we therefore labour to know the will of God? Yes: Understand what the will of the Lord is, Eph. v. 17. Are we to study his secret will? No: for secret things belong not to us. But his revealed will? Yes: for things revealed belong to us, and to our children, that we may do all the words of this law, Deut. xxix. 29. Is obedience to God's revealed will the whole duty of man? Yes: let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man, Eccl. xii. 13.

Q. 40. *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience.*

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law.

1. Was the moral law revealed to man in innocency? Yes: for God created man in his own image, Gen. i. 27. Is it written in the heart of man? Yes: They show the work of the law written in their heart, Rom. ii. 15. Is there then a law of nature? Yes: Doth not even nature itself teach you? 1 Cor. xi. 14. Is that a law of God? Yes: for he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, Job xxxiii. 16. Does natural conscience enforce that law? Yes: for the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, Rom. ii. 14. Did the Gentiles sin by the breach of that law? Yes: what they know naturally, in these things they corrupt themselves, Jude 10. And will they be punished for the breach of it? Yes: they that have sinned without law, shall perish without law, Rom. ii. 12.

2. Has God given us the moral law more fully? Yes: I have written unto them the great things of my law, Hos. viii. 12. Are we under that law as a covenant? No: for a man is not justified by the works of the law, Gal. ii. 16. Are we under it as a rule? Yes: we are under the law to Christ, 1 Cor. ix. 21.

3. Is the law of God very extensive? Yes: Thy commandment is exceeding broad, Ps. cxix. 96. And very excellent? Yes: the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good, Rom. vii. 12. Is it admirable? Yes: Thy testimonies are wonderful, Ps. cxix. 129. Is any thing unjust in it? No: I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right, Ps. cxix. 128. Is it beyond any other law? Yes: what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, Deut. iv. 8.

4. Does the law of God bind the inward man? Yes: for the law is spiritual, Rom. vii. 14. Does it forbid heart sins? Yes: Wash thy heart from wickedness, Jer. iv. 14. Does it require heart service? Yes: My son, give me thy heart, Prov. xxiii. 26. Does the law show us our way? Yes: it is a light to our feet, Ps. cxix. 105. Does it discover sin to us? Yes: by the law is the knowledge of sin, Rom. iii. 20. Does it warn us concerning sin and duty? Yes: by them is thy servant warned, Ps. xix. 11. Does it show us the need of Christ? Yes: the law was our school-master, to bring us to Christ, Gal. iii. 24. And does Christ do that for us which the law could not? Yes: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, Rom. x. 4.

5. Ought we to love the law of God? Yes: I love thy commandments above gold, Ps. cxix. 127. And to consult it upon all occasions? Yes: Thy testimonies are my delight, and my counsellors, *v.* 24. And to confirm it? Yes: We must walk in the law of the Lord, *v.* 1.

Q. 41. *Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?*

A. The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments.

1. Was the moral law in force before the ten commandments were given? Yes: for Abraham commanded his children to keep the way of the Lord, Gen. xviii. 19. Was it at last summed up in these commandments? Yes: for the law was given by Moses, John i. 17. Was the law of the ten commandments given first to Israel? Yes: He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts to the children of Israel, Ps. ciii. 7. But are they binding to us now? Yes: for Christ came not to destroy the law but to fulfil, Matt. v. 17.

2. Did God himself give these commandments? Yes: from his right hand went a fiery law for them, Deut. xxxiii. 2. Did God himself speak to them? Yes: Thou camest down upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, Neh. ix. 13. Did he use the ministry of angels therein? Yes: they received the law by the disposition of angels, Acts vii. 53. Did God himself write them? Yes: he gave unto Moses two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God, Exod. xxxi. 18.

3. Was the law given with much terror? Yes: for it was given upon a mount that burned with fire, and with blackness, and darkness, and tempest, Heb. xii. 18. Was the sight terrible to Moses himself?

Yes: for he said, I exceedingly fear and quake, Heb. xii. 21. Did it strike an awe upon the people? Yes: for they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient, Exod. xxiv. 7. And should not we be awed by the consideration of it? Yes: knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men, 2 Cor. v. 11. Did the ten commandments include the whole moral law? Yes: If thou wilt enter into life, keep these commandments, Matt. xix. 17.

Q. 42. *What is the sum of the ten commandments?*

A. The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind, and our neighbour as ourselves.

1. Is all the law summed up in a word? Yes: all the law is fulfilled in one word, Gal. v. 14. Is that a short and sweet word? Yes: for it is love; love is the fulfilling of the law, Rom. xiii. 10.

2. Is it our duty to love God? Yes: Take good heed to yourselves that ye love the Lord your God, Josh. xxiii. 11. Must we love him with a sincere love? Yes: Grace be with them that love him in sincerity, Eph. vi. 24. And with a strong love? Yes: My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. Ps. xlii. 2. And with a superlative love? Yes: There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee, Ps. lxxiii. 25. And is all this included in the first and great commandment? Yes: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; this is the first and great commandment, Matt. xxii. 37, 38. And is this the sum of our duty to God? Yes: for if any man love God, the same is known of him, 1 Cor. viii. 3. Must those who love God be careful to please him? Yes: for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, 1 John v. 3. And must they be afraid to offend him? Yes: Ye that love the Lord, hate evil, Ps. xcvii. 10.

3. Is there good reason why we should thus love God? Yes: Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God, Deut. xi. 1. For is he most lovely in himself? Yes: God is love, 1 John iv. 8. And most loving to us? Yes: we love him because he first loved us, 1 John iv. 19. Will he return our love? Yes: I love those that love me, Prov. viii. 17. Will he reward it in this world? Yes: all things shall work together for good to them that love God, Rom. viii. 28. And in the other world? Yes: for eye hath not seen what God hath prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. ii. 9. Will you then love God above all? Yes: I will love thee, O Lord, my strength, Ps. xviii. 1. And pray to God to give you grace to love him? Yes: the Lord direct our hearts into his love, 2 Thess. iii. 5.

4. Is it our duty to love our neighbour too? Yes: He that loveth God, must love his brother also, 1 John iv. 21. Can we pretend to love God, if we do not love our neighbour? No: he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen, 1 John iv. 20. Is this the fulfilling of the law? Yes: all is comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, Rom. xiii. 9. James ii. 8. Gal. v. 14. Is it the second great commandment? Yes: the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, Matt. xxii. 39. Is it an old commandment? Yes: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, I am the Lord, Lev. xix. 18. Is it a new commandment? Yes: A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, John xiii. 34.

5. Must we have a respect for all men? Yes: Honour all men, 1 Pet. ii. 17. Especially for all good men? Yes: we must honour them that fear the Lord, Ps. xv. 4. Must we esteem one another? Yes: Let each esteem other better than themselves, Phil. ii. 3. Must we sympathize with one another? Yes: Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep, Rom. xii. 15. Must we please one another? Yes: for even Christ pleased not himself, Rom. xv. 2, 3. Must we help one another? Yes: Bear ye one another's burthens, Gal. vi. 2. Must we do good to one another? Yes: as we have opportunity we must do good to all men, Gal. vi. 10. Must we pray for one another? Yes: Pray one for another, that ye may be healed, James v. 16. Must we love even our enemies? Yes: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, Matt. v. 44.

6. Must you hurt nobody in word or deed? No: A citizen of Sion doth not evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour, Ps. xv. 3. Must you be true and just in all your dealings? Yes: That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, Deut. xvi. 20. Must you bear no malice or hatred in your heart? No: for whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, 1 John iii. 15.

7. Are we to love our neighbour as ourselves? Yes: for we are members one of another, Eph. iv. 25. As truly as we love ourselves? Yes: Let love be without dissimulation, Rom. xii. 9. And as fruitfully? Yes: Not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, 1 Cor. x. 33. And as constantly as we love ourselves? Yes: Let brotherly love continue, Heb. xiii. 1. Ought we therefore to do as we would be done by? Yes: Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, Matt. vii. 12. Should we in our places promote Christian love? Yes: for every one that loveth is born of God, 1 John iv. 7. And will this be our comfort? Yes: Live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you, 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Q. 43. *What is the preface to the ten commandments?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments is in these words, I am the Lord thy God, which brought

thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1 Did God himself speak the ten commandments? Yes: God spake all these words, saying, Exod. xx. 1. Was it fit they should be introduced with a solemn preface? Yes: Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken, Isa. i. 2. Did he therein assert his own authority? Yes: I am the Lord thy God. Did he remind them of the great things he had lately done for them? Yes: I am the Lord thy God, from the land of Egypt, Hos. xii. 9.

2. Was the condition of Israel in Egypt very miserable? Yes: for the Egyptians made them to serve with rigour, Exod. i. 13. Did God bring them out of Egypt? Yes: He brought Israel from among them, for his mercy endureth for ever, Ps. cxxxvi. 11. Did he do it miraculously? Yes: With a strong hand, and a stretched-out arm, for his mercy endureth for ever, *v.* 12. Did this oblige them to keep his commandments? Yes: When I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I said, Obey my voice, Jer. vii. 22, 23. But does this concern us? Yes: for unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, Heb. iv. 2. For is God the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes: of the Gentiles also, Rom. iii. 29.

Q. 44. *What does the preface to the ten commandments teach us?*

A. The preface to the ten commandments teaches us, that because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all God's commandments.

1. Is God the Lord Jehovah? Yes: I am the Lord, that is my name, Isa. xlii. 8. Is that a reason why we should keep his commandments? Yes: Ye shall observe all my statutes, and do them, I am the Lord, Lev. xix. 37. Is he our God? Yes: He is thy praise, and he is thy God, Deut. x. 21. Is that a reason why we should keep his commandments? Yes: for all people will walk every one in the name of their God, Mic. iv. 5. Ps. xcv. 7.

2. Is he our Redeemer? Yes: Thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer, Isa. lxiii. 16. Has he redeemed us from outward troubles? Yes: Behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, Josh. xiv. 10. And are we therefore bound to keep his commandments? Yes: Truly, I am thy servant, thou hast loosed my bonds, Ps. cxvi. 16. And are we very ungrateful if we do not? Yes: Now thou hast given us such deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments? Ezra ix. 13, 14.

3. Has God brought us out of a spiritual Egypt? Yes: for Christ proclaims liberty to the captives, Isa. lxi. 1. Are we delivered from the bonds of sin? Yes: He shall redeem Israel from all their iniquities, Ps. cxxx. 8. And is our deliverance by Christ greater than theirs out of Egypt? Yes: for if the Son make you free, then you shall be free indeed, John viii. 36. And are we therefore bound to keep all his commandments? Yes: for we are delivered out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him, Luke i. 74, 75. And was this the design of our redemption? Yes: He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, Tit. ii. 14. Is there then all the reason in the world why we should be religious? Yes: Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, Isa. i. 18.

Q. 45. *What is the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment is, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

1. Is it an essential duty of religion to worship God? Yes: for those have no hope that are without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. Are we concerned to be right in the object of our worship? Yes: We must know what we worship, John iv. 22. Does the first commandment direct us in this? Yes: for the first of all the commandments is this, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, Mark xii. 29.

2. Does God lay a stress upon our having him for our God? Yes: Hear, O my people, and I will speak; I am God, even thy God, Ps. l. 7. And upon our having him only? Yes: Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee; there shall no strange god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange god, Ps. lxxxi. 8, 9. Did Israel need this commandment? Yes: for their fathers served other gods, Josh. xxiv. 2. And were they tempted to serve other gods? Yes: the gods of the people that were round about them, Deut. xiii. 7.

Q. 36. *What is required in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

1. Does that which forbids us to have any other gods, require us to have the true God? Yes: Put away the strange gods, and serve the Lord only, 1 Sam. vii. 3. 4. Is it our duty to acknowledge God? Yes: The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God, 1 Kings xviii. 39. And must we acknowledge him to be the only true God? Yes: Thou art the God, even thou alone, 2 Kings xix. 15.

2. Is it our duty to acquaint ourselves with him? Yes: Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace, Job xxii. 21. Must we grow in that acquaintance? Yes: increasing in the knowledge of God, Col. i. 10. And may we attain to it? Yes: then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, Hos. vi. 3.

3. Must we accept of God for our God? Yes: Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God,

Deut. xxvi. 17, 18. And must we join ourselves to him? Yes: Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, Jer. l. 5. And consent to be his? Yes: O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant, Ps. cxvi. 16. Must we take God the Father to be our chief good and highest end? Yes: O God, thou art my God, Ps. lxiii. 1. And God the Son to be our Prince and Saviour? Yes: My Lord and my God, John xx. 28. And God the Holy Ghost to be our sanctifier, teacher, guide, and comforter? Yes: for they that are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God, Rom. viii. 14. Must we renounce all others? Yes: For by thee only will we make mention of thy name, Isa. xxvi. 13. Must we do this deliberately? Yes: Choose ye this day whom ye will serve, Josh. xxiv. 15. Must we do it solemnly? Yes: One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, Isa. xliv. 5. Must we do it resolutely? Yes: Nay, but we will serve the Lord, Josh. xxiv. 21. May we be at liberty to change our Master? No: but with purpose of heart must cleave to the Lord, Acts xi. 23.

4. When we have avouched the Lord for our God, must we apply ourselves to him? Yes: If the Lord be God, then follow him, 1 Kings xviii. 21. Must we glorify him accordingly? Yes: Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, Ps. xxix. 2. Must we worship him? Yes: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve, Matt. iv. 10. Must we worship him with inward worship? Yes: we must serve him with our spirits, Rom. i. 9. Is that the worship he requires? Yes: for such the Father seeks to worship him, John iv. 23.

5. Must we remember God? Yes: Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, Eccl. xii. 1. And think of him with delight? Yes: My meditation of him shall be sweet, Ps. civ. 34. Must we adore and admire him? Yes: Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Exod. xv. 11. Must we fear him above all? Yes: Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread, Isa. viii. 13. And reverence him? Yes: he is to be had in reverence of all them that are about him, Ps. lxxxix. 7. Must we submit to his word? Yes: Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears, 1 Sam. iii. 9. And submit to his will? Yes: It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, v. 18.

6. Must we love God above all? Yes: O love the Lord all ye his saints, Ps. xxxi. 23. Must our desire be towards him? Yes: So panteth my soul after thee, O God, Ps. xlii. 1. Must our delight be in him? Yes: Delight thyself always in the Lord, Ps. xxxvii. 4. Must our dependence be upon him? Yes: In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust, Ps. xxxi. 1.

7. Must we live a life of communion with God? Yes: Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord, Ps. xxv. 15. And a life of complacency in him? Yes: Rejoice in the Lord always, Phil. iv. 4. And a life of conformity to him? Yes: Be ye holy, for I am holy, 1 Pet. i. 16. And a life of confidence in him? Yes: Commit thy way unto the Lord, Ps. xxxvii. 5. And a life of regard to him? Yes: In all thy ways acknowledge him, Prov. iii. 6. Must our hearts go out towards him? Yes: Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, Ps. xxv. 1. And must we have him always in our eye? Yes: I have set the Lord always before me, Ps. xvi. 8. And must we walk with him in the whole course of our conversation? Yes: as Enoch walked with God, Gen. v. 24. And is this inward worship the life of religion? Yes: it is better than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices, Mark xii. 33.

Q. 47. *What is forbidden in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying, the true God, as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other which is due to him alone.

1. Is it a great sin to deny the being of God? Yes: The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God, Ps. xiv. 1. Or to deny his omniscience? Yes: They say, The Lord shall not see, Ps. xciv. 7. Or to deny his justice? Yes: He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it, Ps. x. 13. Or his holiness? Yes: Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself, Ps. l. 21. Or his goodness? Yes: I knew thee to be a hard man, Matt. xxv. 24. Or his faithfulness? Yes: Where is the promise of his coming? 2 Pet. iii. 4. Is it a sin to question God's providence? Yes: Is the Lord among us? or is he not? Exod. xvii. 7. Or to question his power? Yes: Can God furnish a table in the wilderness, Ps. lxxviii. 19. And is there such a thing as practical atheism? Yes: They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, Tit. i. 16.

2. Is it a great sin to be ignorant of God? Yes: Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak it to your shame, 1 Cor. xv. 34. Is it a damning sin? Yes: He shall take vengeance on them that know not God, 2 Thess. i. 8. Is it the cause of all other sins? Yes: There is neither truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, in the land, Hos. iv. 1. Is it a great sin to forget God? Yes: Thou hast forgotten the God that formed thee, Deut. xxxii. 18. And to cast off the fear of him? Yes: There is no fear of God before his eyes, Ps. xxxvi. 1. And to live without prayer? Yes: Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, Isa. xliii. 22. And not to glorify him? Yes: The God in whose hand thy breath is, hast thou not glorified, Dan. v. 23.

3. Is all distrust of God a sin? Yes: the evil heart of unbelief departs from the living God, Heb. iii. 12. And tempting God? Yes: Thou shalt not

tempt the Lord thy God, Matt. iv. 7. And all the coldness of our love to him? Yes: But their heart is far from me, Matt. xv. 8. Does this commandment forbid all ungodliness? Yes: for the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness, Rom. i. 18. And all idolatry? Yes: Little children, keep yourselves from idols, 1 John v. 21.

3. Had the Gentiles other gods besides the true God? Yes: they had gods many, and lords many, 1 Cor. viii. 5. And were those gods devils? Yes: they sacrificed to devils, and not to God, 1 Cor. x. 20. May we have communion with them? No: I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils, 1 Cor. x. 20. Have those fellowship with them who consult with witches? Yes: Is it because there is not a God in Israel, that thou goest to inquire of Beelzebub, the god of Ekron, 2 Kings i. 3. Did the Gentiles multiply their gods? Yes: According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, Jer. ii. 28. Were they gods of their own making? Yes: And they that make them are like unto them, Ps. cxv. 8. Was not that a great affront to the living God? Yes: They changed the truth of God into a lie, Rom. i. 25.

5. Is there not such a thing as spiritual idolatry? Yes: These men have set up their idols in their hearts, Ezek. xiv. 4. Is it idolatry to make a god of our appetites? Yes: Whose god is their belly, Phil. iii. 19. Or a god of our money? Yes: for covetousness is idolatry, Col. iii. 5. May we give that respect to any creature which is due to God alone? No: for his glory he will not give to another, Isa. xlii. 8. Is it therefore a sin to love them more than God? Yes: He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me, Matt. x. 37. And to trust in them? Yes: Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, Jer. xvii. 5. Is this spiritual adultery? Yes: She went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith the Lord, Hos. ii. 13.

Q. 48. *What are we especially taught by these words,* [*before me,*] *in the first commandment?*

A. These words, [before me,] in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, takes notice of, and is much displeased with, the sin of having any other God.

1. Are we always in God's sight? Yes: Thou knowest my down-sitting, and my up-rising, Ps. cxxxix. 2. Are all our actions in his sight? Yes: All my ways are before thee, Ps. cxix. 168. Does he take notice of them? Yes: he pondereth all our goings, Prov. v. 21.

2. Are all our good works before him? Yes: I know thy work, and thy labour, and thy patience, Rev. ii. 2. Does he know all our inward worship of him? Yes: The Lord hearkened, and heard those that thought on his name, Mal. iii. 16. And should that encourage us to have him for our God? Yes: for your Father sees in secret, and will reward openly, Matt. vi. 4.

3. Are all our evil works before him? Yes: He sets our iniquities before him, Ps. xc. 8. Is the having of other gods oftentimes a secret sin? Yes: They do it in the dark, and say, The Lord sees us not, Exod. viii. 12. But does God see? Yes: He that formed the eye, shall he not see it? Ps. xciv. 9. Does he take notice of all our neglects of him? Yes: if we have forgotten the name of our God he knows it. And does he take notice of all our inclinations to other gods? Yes: if we have stretched out our hands to a strange god, shall not God search this out? Ps. xliv. 20, 21. And is he much displeased with secret idolatry? Yes: Seest thou the great abominations that they commit? Ezek. viii. 6. And should this oblige us to be faithful to him? Yes: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

Q. 49. *What is the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment is, Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath; or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

1. Does the second commandment concern the ordinances of God's worship, as the first object of it? Yes: Therefore ye shall keep mine ordinances, Lev. xviii. 10. Was it requisite there should be a law concerning them? Yes: Lest ye say, How did these nations serve their gods? so will I do likewise, Deut. xii. 30. Is this binding to us now? Yes: Dearly beloved, flee from idolatry, 1 Cor. x. 14. Are we Christians forbidden to worship images? Yes: That they should not worship idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, Rev. ix. 20.

2. Does this commandment forbid the making of images for a religious use? Yes: Cursed be the man that maketh any graven image, Deut. xxvii. 15. Does it forbid the making an image of what is in heaven above? Yes: Lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, shouldst be driven to worship them, Deut. iv. 19. Or on earth beneath? Yes: As they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox, Ps. cvi. 20. Or in the waters under the earth? Yes: As they made the likeness of creeping things, Rom. i. 23.

3. Does it forbid us to bow down to them? Yes: Shall I bow down to the stock of a tree? Isa. xliv. 19. Or to worship them? Yes: Thou shalt worship no other God, Exod. xxxiv. 14. Or to show any re-

respect to them? Yes: I will take away the names of Baalim out of their mouth, Hos. ii. 17. Was it requisite this commandment should be thus enlarged? Yes: Precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, Isa. xxviii. 10. And that it should be backed with many reasons? Yes: for they are mad upon their idols, Jer. l. 38.

Q. 50. *What is required in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed in his word.

1. Is it our duty solemnly to worship God? Yes: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, Matt. iv. 10. Do we thereby honour him? Yes: we give unto him the glory due unto his name, Ps. xxix. 2. Does the light of nature teach us to worship God? Yes: they cried every man unto his god, Jonah i. 5. But does it teach us sufficiently how to worship him? No: Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Acts xvii. 23. Has God in his word appointed us in what way to worship him? Yes: for this was ordained in Joseph for a testimony, Ps. lxxxi. 5. And must we worship him in the appointed way? Yes: See thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee, Heb. viii. 5.

2. Are we to receive such ordinances as God has appointed? Yes: The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey, Josh. xxiv. 24. Should we labour to understand them? Yes: What mean ye by this service? Exod. xii. 26. And are we to observe them? Yes: Observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, Matt. xxviii. 20. And to observe them duly? Yes: as the duty of every day requires, Ezra iii. 4.

3. Are we to keep God's ordinances? Yes: That good thing which was committed to thee, keep, 2 Tim. i. 14. Are we to keep them carefully? Yes: Keep them as the apple of thine eye, Prov. vii. 2. Must we keep them pure without corruption? Yes: Add thou not to his words, Prov. xxx. 6. And entire, without diminution? Yes: We must walk in all the ordinances of the Lord, Luke i. 6. May we neither add nor diminish? No: Thou shalt neither add thereto, nor diminish from it, Deut. xii. 32.

4. Must we worship God in the spirit? Yes: We are the circumcision that worship God in the spirit, Phil. iii. 3. Must we be inward with God in every service? Yes: for bodily exercise profiteth little, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Is ignorance the mother of devotion? No: for if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? Mal. i. 8. Is it the mother of destruction? Yes: My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge, Hos. iv. 6.

5. Ought we to have an eye to the word of God in our religious worship? Yes: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin, Rom. xiv. 23. And to glorify God in it? Yes: I will be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me, Lev. x. 3. And ought we to shun all idolatrous worships? Yes: For I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils, 1 Cor. x. 20.

Q. 51. *What is forbidden in the second commandment?*

A. The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word?

1. Is it a sin to worship the true God by images? Yes: for it changes the truth of God into a lie, Rom. i. 25. Are not images laymen's books? No: for an image is a teacher of lies, Hab. ii. 18. Is it possible to make an image of God? No: we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device, Acts xvii. 29. Do we know what to represent God by? No: To whom then will ye liken God? Isa. xl. 18. Do they that pretend to it put a great affront upon him? Yes: for they change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, Rom. i. 23.

2. May we worship Christ by an image? No: For though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more, 2 Cor. v. 16. Is it idolatry to worship the consecrated host? Yes: for it is bread which we break, 1 Cor. x. 16. Is it idolatry to pray to saints and angels? Yes: See thou do it not, but worship God, Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9.

3. Must we be careful to avoid all appearances of idolatry? Yes: Take ye therefore good heed to yourselves, lest ye corrupt yourselves, Deut. iv. 15. Should we choose to die rather than worship images? Yes: But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up, Dan. iii. 18.

4. Is it a sin to worship God in any way not appointed in his word? Yes: In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, Matt. xv. 9. May we ourselves invent ordinances of worship? No: They went a whoring with their own inventions, Ps. cvi. 39. Is it not enough if what we invent is not forbidden? No: They offered a strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not, Lev. x. 1. Is it a sin to despise any of God's ordinances? Yes: Ye said also, Behold what a weariness is it! Mal. i. 13. Or to be careless in our attendance upon them? Yes: Cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and vows and sacrifices to the Lord a corrupt thing, Mal. i. 14. Are they spiritual idolaters who make images of God in their fancy? Yes: they are vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened, Rom. i. 21.

Q. 52. *What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment, are God's sovereignty over us, his property in us, and the zeal he has to his own worship.

1. Is there good reason why we should take heed of idolatry? Yes: Turn ye not to idols, neither make to yourselves molten gods, I am the Lord your God, Lev. xix. 4. Has God a sovereignty over us? Yes: for he is a great God, and a great King above all gods, Ps. xcv. 3. Ought we therefore to worship him, as he has appointed us? Yes: O come let us worship, and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker, Ps. xcv. 6. And not to worship idols? Yes: for they can do neither good nor evil, Isa. xli. 23.

2. Has God a property in us? Yes: for we are the people of his pasture, Ps. xcv. 7. Ought we therefore to worship him? Yes: He is thy Lord, and worship thou him, Ps. xlv. 11. And not to worship other gods? Yes: for hath a nation changed their gods? Jer. ii. 11.

3. Is God jealous in the matters of his worship? Yes: The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God, Exod. xxxiv. 14. Is he much displeased with those who corrupt it? Yes: They provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities, 1 Kings xvi. 13. Do those who do so hate him? Yes: Idolaters are haters of God, Rom. i. 25, 30. Will he visit their iniquity? Yes: In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them, Exod. xxxii. 34. Will he visit it upon the children? Yes: Our fathers sinned, and are not, and we have borne their iniquities, Lam. v. 7. And is it just with him to do so? Yes: for they are the children of whoredoms, Hos. ii. 4. But will he visit it for ever? No: but to the third and fourth generation, Exod. xxxiv. 7.

4. Will those who love God keep his commandments? Yes: If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, John xv. 10. Will he show mercy to such? Yes: for he hath said, I love them that love me, Prov. viii. 17. Will he show mercy to thousands of such? Yes: for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, Ps. ciii. 17.

Q. 53. *What is the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

1. Does the third commandment concern the manner of our worshipping God? Yes: That we serve the Lord with fear, Ps. ii. 11. Is it enough that we seek God in a due ordinance? No: but we must seek him after the due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13.

2. Is God's name all that whereby he makes himself known? Yes: He proclaimed the name of the Lord, Exod. xxxiv. 5. Ought we to make use of his name? Yes: By thee only will we make mention of thy name, Isa. xxvi. 13. And to take heed of abusing it? Yes: Neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God, I am the Lord, Lev. xviii. 21.

Q. 54. *What is required in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment requires a holy and reverent use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.

1. Does this commandment require us to glorify the name of God? Yes: They shall worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name, Ps. lxxxvi. 9. Are we to think of God's name with seriousness? Yes: They feared the Lord, and thought upon his name, Mal. iii. 16. Are we to speak of it with reverence? Yes: For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth, therefore let thy words be few, Eccl. v. 2. Are we to call upon his name with a holy awe? Yes: for we that are but dust and ashes speak to the Lord of glory, Gen. xviii. 27. Are we to worship God reverently in every religious duty? Yes: We must serve him acceptably, with reverence and godly fear, Heb. xii. 28. And is there good reason for it? Yes: for our God is a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29. Ought we to behave ourselves very reverently in public worship? Yes: for God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him, Ps. lxxxix. 7.

2. Must we be holy in worshipping God? Yes: Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, Ps. xcvi. 9. Must we be holy in prayer and praise? Yes: lifting up holy hands, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Must our thoughts be fixed? Yes: O God, my heart is fixed, Ps. cviii. 1. Must pious and devout affections be working in us? Yes: we must be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom. xii. 11. Must we be very humble in our approaches to God? Yes: as the publican that stood afar off, and would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, Luke xviii. 13.

3. Must we give glory to God in his word? Yes: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name, Ps. cxxxviii. 2. Must we hear it with reverence? Yes: We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God, Acts x. 33. Must we give glory to God in swearing when we are called to it? Yes: Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt swear by his name, Deut. vi. 13. Must we be cautious in swearing? Yes: we must fear an oath, Eccl. ix. 2. Must we be conscientious in swearing? Yes: Thou shalt swear in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness, Jer. iv. 2. Must we give glory to God in vowing? Yes: Vow and pay unto the Lord your God, Ps. lxxvi. 11.

4. Must we glorify God in his great works? Yes: we must magnify his works which men behold, Job xxxvi. 24. And must we glorify him by our good

works? Yes: Let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

Q. 55. *What is forbidden in the third commandment?*

A. The third commandment forbids all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God makes himself known.

1. Do all hypocrites take God's name in vain? Yes: for they make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth and righteousness, Isa. xlviii. 1. Do they therefore profane that name? Yes: for the name of God is blasphemed through them, Rom. ii. 24. Do hypocritical worshippers take God's name in vain? Yes: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. And is their seeming religion a vain religion? Yes: That man's religion is vain, James i. 26. Can it be pleasing to God? No: Bring no more vain oblations, Isa. i. 11, 13. Can it be profitable to themselves? No: for they receive the grace of God in vain, 2 Cor. vi. 1. Do covenant-breakers take God's name in vain? Yes: for they lie unto him with their tongues, Ps. lxxviii. 36.

2. Is it a sin against this commandment to use the name of God lightly and carelessly? Yes: For thou shalt fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God, Deut. xxviii. 58. Will God's friends thus affront him? No: Thine enemies take thy name in vain, Ps. cxxxix. 20. Is it the character of the wicked? Yes: Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins, Jer. xii. 2.

3. Is it a sin against this commandment to swear rashly? Yes: Above all things, my brethren, swear not, Jam. v. 12. Is it a sin to swear by creatures? Yes: whether by heaven, or by the earth, or by the head, Matt. v. 34—36. Must our communication be yea, yea, and nay, nay? Yes: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil, Matt. v. 37. Is it a sin to swear falsely? Yes: Thou shalt not forswear thyself, Matt. v. 33. Is prophane swearing a great sin? Yes: for it blasphemes that worthy name by which we are called, Jam. ii. 7. Is it an inexcusable sin? Yes: for they transgress without cause, Ps. xxv. 3. Does it bring judgments upon families? Yes: for the curse shall enter into the house of him that swears falsely, and shall consume it, Zech. v. 4. And upon nations? Yes: because of swearing the land mourns, Jer. xxiii. 10.

4. Is it a sin against this commandment to jest with the word of God? Yes: Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong, Isa. xxviii. 22. Or to use it as a charm? Yes: as those exorcists which said, We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth, Acts xix. 13. Is it a sin to put a slight upon sacred things? Yes: Ye have profaned my name, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is contemptible, Mal. i. 12.

Q. 56. *What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, that however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

1. Do the breakers of the third commandment commonly escape punishment from men? Yes: for men hear the voice of swearing, and utter it not, Lev. v. 1. And do they fancy they shall escape God's judgments? Yes: the wicked contemn God, and yet say in their heart, he will not require it, Ps. x. 13. But shall they escape God's judgments? No: Be not deceived, God is not mocked, Gal. vi. 7.

2. Shall those who profane God's holy name escape his righteous judgments? No: The Lord will make their plagues wonderful, Deut. xxviii. 59. Shall hypocrites escape them? No: Woe unto you scribes and pharisees, hypocrites, Matt. xxiii. 13. Shall scoffers escape them? No: for they shall be broken, and snared, and taken, Isa. xxviii. 13. Shall covenant breakers escape them? No: Seeing he despised the oath, by breaking the covenant, he shall not escape, Ezek. xvii. 18.

3. Shall swearers go unpunished? No: for he that sweareth shall be cut off, Zech. v. 3. Shall they who use God's name vainly go unpunished? No: for every idle word that men speak they must give account, Matt. xii. 36. And shall their words be witnesses against them? Yes: God shall cause their own tongues to fall upon them, Ps. lxiv. 8.

Q. 57. *What is the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment is, Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

1. Does the fourth commandment concern the time of worship? Yes: for there is a time to every purpose, Eccl. iii. 1. Must our worship be confined to that time? No: for we must pray always, Eph. vi. 18. But is that appointed for the certain time? Yes: Blow up the trumpet in the time appointed, Ps. lxxxi. 3. Is it the will of God we should take special notice of this command? Yes: for he has said, Remember it. Are we apt to forget it? Yes: they have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, Ezek. xxii. 26.

2. Must we keep holy the sabbath day? Yes: Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, Deut. v. 12. Is

a sabbath a day of rest? Yes: It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, Lev. xvi. 31. Must we labour the six days, and do all our work? Yes: For in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, Gen. iii. 19. But is not work for God part of our work? Yes: for we must work the works of God, John vi. 28. Must we not then do that on the six days? Yes: Every day will I bless thee, Ps. cxlv. 2. But must we especially do it on sabbath days? Yes: for it is the Holy of the Lord, Isa. lviii. 13. Must we therefore rest from other work on that day? Yes: that we may attend upon the Lord without distraction, 1 Cor. vii. 35.

3. Must children keep holy the sabbath day? Yes: Thou, and thy son, and thy daughter. And servants? Yes: That thy man servant and maid-servant may rest as well as thou, Deut. v. 14. And is there good reason for the sanctification of the sabbath? Yes: Ye shall keep my sabbaths, I am the Lord your God, Lev. xix. 3.

Q. 58. *What is required in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment requires the keeping holy to God such set times as he has appointed in his word; expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy sabbath unto himself.

1. Must holy time be kept holy? Yes: for every thing is beautiful in its season, Eccl. iii. 11. Can man make time holy? No: For I am the Lord which sanctify you, Lev. xx. 8.

2. Has God appointed a sabbath? Yes: It is as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, Deut. v. 12. Had he authority to do so? Yes: For the day is thine, the night also is thine, Ps. lxxiv. 16. Did he appoint it for us? Yes: for the sabbath was made for man, Mark ii. 27. Did he appoint one day in seven? Yes: For a seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. One whole day? Yes: for the evening and the morning were the first day, Gen. i. 5.

3. Must we keep it? Yes: Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep, Exod. xxxi. 13. Must we keep it as a treasure? Yes: we must call the sabbath honourable, Isa. lviii. 13. And keep it as a talent? Yes: For thou madest known unto them thy holy sabbaths, Neh. ix. 14. Must we keep it with care? Yes: we must lay hold on it, to keep the sabbath from polluting it, Isa. lvi. 2. Must we keep it holy to God? Yes: For he that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord, Rom. xiv. 6.

Q. 59. *Which day of the seven has God appointed to be the weekly sabbath?*

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly sabbath, and the first day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath.

1. Was the sabbath appointed from the beginning of the world? Yes: God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, when the heavens and the earth were finished, Gen. ii. 1—3. Was it in remembrance of the work of creation? Yes: because that in it he rested from all his work, Gen. ii. 3. Was it observed before the giving of the law upon mount Sinai? Yes: for before that it was said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath to the Lord, Exod. xvi. 23. Was that appointed to be kept on the seventh day of the week? Yes: For he spake of the seventh day on this wise, Heb. iv. 4.

2. Was the law of the sabbath given more particularly to Israel? Yes: I gave them my sabbath to be a sign between me and them, Ezek. xx. 12. Was it religiously observed among them? Yes: for their enemies did mock at their sabbaths, Lam. i. 7. Did they sanctify the sabbath in solemn assemblies? Yes: Moses of old time is read in the synagogues every sabbath day, Acts xv. 21. Was the blessing confined to the seventh day? No: For the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it, Exod. xx. 11.

3. Was the sabbath to continue in gospel times? Yes: For there remaineth the keeping of a sabbath to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9. marg. Did Christ intend it should continue? Yes: for he said, Pray that your flight be not on the sabbath day, Matt. xxiv. 20. Did he in order to that expound the fourth commandment? Yes: for he showed that it is lawful to do well upon the sabbath day, Matt. xii. 12. Is there the same need of sabbaths now that ever there was? Yes: for I gave them my sabbaths that they might know that I am the Lord, Ezek. xx. 12.

4. Is the sabbath changed now to the first day of the week? Yes: for on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread, Acts xx. 7. Was it because on that day of the week our Lord Jesus rose from the dead? Yes: for he rose as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, Matt. xxviii. 1. And because on that day the Spirit was poured out? Yes: for that was when the day of Pentecost was fully come, Acts ii. 1. Was it fit there should be an alteration? Yes: For it shall no more be said, The Lord liveth that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but the Lord liveth that brought them up from the land of the north, Jer. xvi. 14, 15.

5. Did the apostles observe the first day of the week? Yes: On the first day of the week let every one lay by, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Did the primitive church call it the Lord's day? Yes: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, Rev. i. 10. In a thing of this nature ought we to acquiesce? Yes: For if any man will be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God, 1 Cor. xi. 16.

Q. 60. *How is the sabbath to be sanctified?*

A. The sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful in other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

1. Must we rest on the sabbath day? Yes: six days may work be done, but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, Exod. xxxi. 15. Must we rest from worldly employments? Yes: ye shall hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein, Jer. xvii. 24. And from recreations? Yes: not finding thine own pleasure, Isa. lviii. 13. Is this to signify our being dead to this world? Yes: for he that is entered into his rest has ceased from his own works, Heb. iv. 10. And to awaken us to think of leaving it? Yes: for here we have no continuing city, Heb. xiii. 14. Must this rest be dedicated to God? Yes: it is a holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord, Exod. xxxv. 2.

2. Must we spend time on that day in the public exercises of God's worship? Yes: for it is a holy convocation, Lev. xxiii. 3. Must we do so every sabbath, as we have opportunity? Yes: From one sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord, Isa. lxvi. 23. And must we not absent ourselves from public worship? No: Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, Heb. x. 25. Must we spend time on that day in the private exercises of religion? Yes: It is the sabbath of the Lord in all your dwellings, Lev. xxiii. 3. Did the disciples of Christ thus spend the first Lord's day? Yes: for on the first day of the week the disciples were assembled, John xx. 19.

3. Must we prepare for the sabbath day beforehand? Yes: It was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on, Luke xxiii. 54. Must the sabbath be a day of holy joy? Yes: We will rejoice and be glad in it, Ps. cxviii. 24. Must it be a day of praise? Yes: the psalm for the sabbath day begins, It is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord, Ps. xcii. 1. Must we be spiritual in the duties of the day? Yes: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day? Rev. i. 10. And must we take pleasure in them? Yes: Call the Sabbath a delight, Isa. lviii. 13.

4. Are works of mercy and charity proper for a sabbath day? Yes: Ought not this woman to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day, Luke xiii. 16. And may works of necessity be done on that day? Yes: Do not you on the sabbath lead your ox, or your ass, to watering? Luke xiii. 15.

Q. 61. *What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment forbids the omission, or careless performance, of the duties required, profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about worldly employments or recreations.

1. Do we profane the sabbath if we neglect the sabbath work? Yes: I came seeking fruit, but find none, Luke xiii. 7. Or if we perform carelessly? Yes: Ye brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick, Mal. i. 13. Or if we be weary of it? Yes: They say, When will the sabbath be gone? Amos viii. 5. Or if we idle away sabbath time? Yes: Why stand ye here all the day idle? Matt. xx. 6. And much more if we do that which is in itself sinful? Yes: They have defiled my sanctuary in the same day, and have profaned my sabbaths, Ezek. xxiii. 38.

2. Do we profane the sabbath by violating the sabbath rest? Yes: What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Neh. xiii. 17. May we not buy and sell on that day? No: Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise, John ii. 16. May we not work harvest-work on that day? No: In earing-time, and in harvest, thou shalt rest, Exod. xxxiv. 21. May we not however think and speak at our pleasure on that day? No: Not doing thine own ways, nor speaking thine own words, Isa. lviii. 13.

3. Was he punished that gathered sticks on the sabbath? Yes: they stoned him with stones that he died, Numb. xv. 36. Are nations sometimes punished for sabbath profanation? Yes: If ye will not hallow the sabbath day, I will kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, Jer. xvii. 27. Is the contempt of the sabbath a contempt of God? Yes: This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath day, John ix. 16.

Q. 62. *What are the reasons annexed to the fourth commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the fourth commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his claiming a special property in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the sabbath day.

1. Has God allowed us six days of the week? Yes: Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work. Has he reserved but one day in seven for himself? Yes: for he hath not made us to serve with an offering, nor wearied us with incense, Isa. xliii. 23. Does he claim a special property in the seventh day? Yes: it is the sabbath of the Lord thy God. Has our Lord Jesus a property in it? Yes: for the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath, Mark ii. 28. Ought we not therefore to devote it to his service? Yes: For will a man rob God? Mal. iii. 8.

2. Did God the Creator set us an example of sabbath rest? Yes: for the seventh day he rested and was refreshed, Exod. xxxi. 17. Did God the Redeemer set us an example of sabbath work? Yes:

for as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, Luke iv. 16. And has he given us encouragement in the work of the Christian sabbath? Yes: for when they were assembled on the first day of the week, Jesus stood in the midst, John xx. 19.

3. Has God blessed the sabbath day, and so put an honour upon it? Yes: The Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. Is it not an ill thing then for us to put a slight upon it? Yes: As they do that despise the holy things, and profane the sabbath, Ezek. xxii. 8. Has God appointed it to be a day of blessings to us? Yes: There will I come to thee, and will bless thee, Exod. xx. 24. Are not they enemies to themselves then that neglect it? Yes: they forsake their own mercies, John ii. 8.

Q. 63. *What is the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment is, Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

1. Do the six last commandments concern our duty to our neighbour? Yes: for this is his commandment, That we love one another, 1 John iii. 23. And must we mind that as well as our duty to God? Yes: providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men, 2 Cor. viii. 21. And are we concerned to be very careful in second-table duties? Yes: that the name of God, and his doctrine, be not blasphemed, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Will our devotions be acceptable without this? No: When ye make many prayers I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood, Isa. i. 15.

2. Is religion toward God a branch of universal righteousness? Yes: Render to God the things that are God's, Matt. xxii. 21. And his righteousness toward men a branch of true religion? Yes: for pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, Jam. i. 27. Does the law of God require both? Yes: To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God, Mic. vi. 8. And does the grace of the gospel teach both? Yes: To live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. ii. 12. Must every godly man then be an honest man? Yes: for we must live in all godliness and honesty, 1 Tim. ii. 2. And must he be a charitable man? Yes: He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous, Ps. cxii. 4. And will the trial be by this at the great day? Yes: for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, Matt. xxv. 35.

3. Does the fifth commandment concern our duty to our relations? Yes: For all ye are brethren, Matt. xxiii. 8. And must we be careful to do this duty? Yes: that they who will not be won by the word, may be won by the conversation, 1 Pet. iii. 1.

Q. 64. *What is required in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment requires the preserving the honour, and performing the duty, which belongs to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

1. Is it the duty of children to reverence their parents? Yes: Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, Lev. xix. 3. And must they give honour to them? Yes: If I be a father, where is my honour? Mal. i. 6. And may they upon no account despise them? No: Despise not thy mother when she is old, Prov. xxiii. 22. Ought they to carry themselves respectfully towards them? Yes: King Solomon rose up to meet his mother, and bowed himself to her, 1 Kings ii. 19. And to speak honourably of them? Yes: Her children rose up, and called her blessed, Prov. xxxi. 28.

2. Is it the duty of children to obey their parents? Yes: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, Eph. vi. 1. And to receive their instructions? Yes: Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother, Prov. i. 8. And to submit to their correction? Yes: The fathers of our flesh corrected us, and we gave them reverence, Heb. xii. 9. Should children labour to rejoice the hearts of their parents? Yes: My son, if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, Prov. xxiii. 15. And to requite them? Yes: let them show piety at home, and requite their parents, 1 Tim. v. 4. And to have their consent in disposing of themselves? Yes: Jacob obeyed his father, and his mother, and went to Padan-aram, for a wife, Gen. xxviii. 7. Is Christ an example of this subjection? Yes: for he went with his parents to Nazareth, and was subject to them, Luke ii. 51.

3. Is it the duty of children to be respectful to the aged? Yes: Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, Lev. xix. 32. And must they be observant of their teachers? Yes: for they will mourn at the last, who obey not the voice of their teachers, and incline not their ear to them that instruct them, Prov. v. 11, 13. And must they order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters? Yes: ye younger, submit yourselves to the elder, 1 Pet. v. 5.

4. Is it the duty of parents to be tender of their children? Yes: for can a woman forget her sucking child? Isa. xlix. 15. And mild toward them? Yes: for a father pities his children, Ps. ciii. 13. And to bear with them? Yes: as a man spares his son that serves him, Mal. iii. 17. And yet must they correct them when it is necessary? Yes: for he that spares his rod, hates his son; but he that loves him, chastens him betimes, Prov. xiii. 24.

5. Is it the duty of parents to pray for their children? Yes: Job offered for his sons burnt-offerings, according to the number of them all, Job i. 5. And to bless God for them? Yes: They are the children which God hath graciously given thy ser

vant, Gen. xxxiii. 5. Are they to bless them in the name of the Lord? Yes: By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, Heb. xi. 20. And are they to provide for them what is convenient? Yes: If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8.

6. Is it the duty of parents to bring up their children in the fear of God? Yes: Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. vi. 4. And to teach them the things of God? Yes: Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, Deut. vi. 7. And to oblige them to their duty? Yes: I know Abraham, that he will command his children to keep the way of the Lord, Gen. xviii. 19. And ought they to set them a good example? Yes: I will walk within my house with a perfect heart, Ps. ci. 2. And must they patiently part with their children when God calls for them? Yes: Thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, Gen. xxii. 16.

7. Is it the duty of servants to honour their masters and mistresses? Yes: Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, 1 Tim. vi. 1. Is it their duty to obey them? Yes: Servants be obedient to them that are your masters, Eph. vi. 5. And to be just and true to them? Yes: not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, Titus ii. 10. Ought they to be diligent in the duty of their place? Yes: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, Col. iii. 22. And to do it cheerfully? Yes: Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, and with good-will, doing service, Col. iii. 23. Eph. vi. 7. Ought they to be patient under rebukes? Yes: not answering again, Tit. ii. 9. What, though they suffer unjustly? Yes: Servants be subject not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, 1 Pet. ii. 18. And must they have an eye to God in all? Yes: As to the Lord, and not to men, Col. iii. 23.

8. Is it the duty of masters to be just to their servants? Yes: Masters give to your servants that which is just and equal, Col. iv. 1. And to be gentle towards them? Yes: forbearing threatening, Eph. vi. 9. Should all masters of families worship God with their families? Yes: As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, Josh. xxiv. 15. And should they restrain sin in their families? Yes: Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacle, Job xxii. 23.

9. Is it the duty of wives to be respectful to their husbands? Yes: Let the wife see that she reverence her husband, Eph. v. 33. And to love them? Yes: they must love their husbands, and love their children, Tit. ii. 4. Must they be submissive to their husbands? Yes: Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord, Col. iii. 18. Must they be faithful and obedient to them? Yes: they must be chaste, keepers at home, obedient to their own husbands, Tit. ii. 5. Must they receive instruction from them? Yes: If they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home, 1 Cor. xiv. 35. Must they be helpers to them in religion? Yes: that they may be won by the conversation of the wives, 1 Pet. iii. 1.

10. Is it the duty of husbands to love their wives? Yes: Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them, Col. iii. 19. Must they love them dearly? Yes: Let every one love his wife even as himself, Eph. v. 33. And delight in them? Yes: rejoice with the wife of thy youth, Prov. v. 18, 19. And be tender of them? Yes: Giving honour to the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, 1 Pet. iii. 7.

11. Is it the duty of husbands and wives to be pleasing one to another? Yes: He that is married careth how to please his wife, and she that is married how to please her husband, 1 Cor. vii. 33, 34. Is it their duty to live in the fear of God, and to pray together? Yes: as heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered, 1 Pet. iii. 7. Should they promote the eternal salvation one of another? Yes: What knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 1 Cor. vii. 16.

12. Is it the duty of subjects to reverence their magistrates? Yes: Fear God, honour the king, 1 Pet. ii. 17. And to obey them in the Lord? Yes: we must be subject to principalities and powers, and obey magistrates, Tit. iii. 1. And to be loyal to them? Yes: for the powers that be are ordained of God, Rom. xiii. 1. Is it our duty to pray for magistrates? Yes: for kings, and for all that are in authority, 1 Tim. ii. 2. And to pay them tribute? Yes: tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, Rom. xiii. 7. Must we be peaceable under their government? Yes: that we under them may lead a quiet and peaceable life, 1 Tim. ii. 2. And all this conscientiously? Yes: Ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake, Rom. xiii. 5. Ought magistrates to be as parents to their subjects? Yes: Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers, Isa. xlix. 23.

13. Is it the duty of people to love and respect their ministers? Yes: Know them which labour among you, and esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. Ought they to submit to their instructions? Yes: Obey your guides, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, Heb. xiii. 7. And to provide for their comfortable subsistence? Yes: Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth, Gal. vi. 6. And ought ministers to be as spiritual fathers to their people? Yes: We exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 1 Thess. ii. 11.

14. Is it the duty of equals to be kind one to another? Yes: Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, Rom. xii. 10. And to be respectful one to another? Yes: in honour preferring one another, Rom. xii. 10. And to be submissive one to another? Yes: Yea, all of ye, be subject one to another, 1 Pet. v. 5.

Q. 65. *What is forbidden in the fifth commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment forbids the neglecting of, or doing any thing against, the honour and duty which belongs to every one in their several places and relations.

1. Is it a sin for children to despise their parents? Yes: Cursed be he that sets light by his father or mother, Deut. xxvii. 16. Or to disobey them? Yes: the eye that mocks at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it, Prov. xxx. 17. Is it a sin for children prodigally to spend their parents' substance? Yes: He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, Prov. xxix. 16. Or to grieve their parents? Yes: A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother, Prov. x. 1.

2. Is it a sin for inferiors to be rude and undutiful to their superiors? Yes: For a child to behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable, Isa. iii. 5. Is it a sin for superiors to be harsh and unkind to their inferiors? Yes: Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged, Col. iii. 21.

3. Is it a sin to be vexatious to our relations? Yes: Her adversary provoked her to make her to fret, 1 Sam. i. 6. And to be quarrelsome with our relations? Yes: Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we be brethren, Gen. xiii. 8. And to be suspicious of our relations? Yes: for charity thinketh no evil, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.

Q. 66. *What is the reason annexed to the fifth commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the fifth commandment, is a promise of long life and prosperity (as far as it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

1. Is there a gracious promise made to those that honour their parents? Yes: it is the first commandment with promise, Eph. vi. 2. Is long life promised? Yes: That thy days may be long in the land. Is outward prosperity promised? Yes: That it may be well with thee, Eph. vi. 3. Are temporal blessings promised to good people? Yes: Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, 1 Tim. iv. 8. And are they promised particularly to pious and dutiful children? Yes: My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments; for length of days, and long life, and peace shall they add to thee, Prov. iii. 1, 2.

2. Do all good children prosper in this world? No: for all things come alike to all, Eccl. ix. 2. But are they most likely to prosper? Yes: for by humility and the fear of the Lord are riches, honour, and life, Prov. xxii. 4. Shall they prosper as far as is for God's glory? Yes: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me, Ps. l. 15. And as far as is for their own good? Yes: for we read of those whom God sent into captivity for their good, Jer. xxiv. 5. But shall good children live however in the heavenly Canaan? Yes: there their inheritance shall be for ever, Ps. xxxvii. 18. And are disobedient children often punished in this life? Yes: as Absalom that was hanged in an oak, 2 Sam. xviii. 9.

Q. 67. *What is the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment is, Thou shalt not kill.

1. Does the sixth commandment concern our own and our neighbour's life? Yes: for the life is more than meat, Matt. vi. 25. Has God a tender regard to the life of men? Yes: for he giveth to all life and breath, Acts xvii. 25. Has he by this law made a hedge about life? Yes: that men might not be like the fishes of the sea, Hab. i. 14.

2. Did there need this law? Yes: for men live in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another, Tit. iii. 3. Is it a part of the law of nature? Yes: for the barbarous people said of a murderer, that vengeance suffers him not to live, Acts xxviii. 4.

Q. 68. *What is required in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment requires all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others.

1. Are we to take care of our own lives? Yes: No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, Eph. v. 29. Must we endeavour the preservation of them? Yes: Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life, Job ii. 4. Are we to be careful of our diet? Yes: Hast thou found honey, eat so much as is sufficient for thee, Prov. xxv. 16. Are we to use physic when we need it? Yes: Take a lump of figs and lay it upon the boil, Isa. xxxviii. 21. And are we to be cheerful? Yes: for a merry heart doeth good like a medicine, Prov. xvii. 22.

2. But may we deny Christ to save our lives? No: he that so saveth his life shall lose it, Matt. xvi. 25. May we commit any wilful sin to save our lives? No: we must do no evil that good may come, Rom. iii. 8. But what we do for the preservation of our own lives, must it be with an eye to God's glory? Yes: That I may live, and keep thy word, Ps. cxix. 17. Live and praise thee, *v.* 175.

3. Are we to be compassionate even to the brute creatures? Yes: A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast, Prov. xii. 10. Are we to be careful of the lives of others as well as of our own? Yes: It was Cain that said, Am I my brother's keeper? Gen. iv. 9. Are we to do what we can in our places for the relief of those who are exposed to violence? Yes: We must deliver them that are ready to be slain, Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. Must we succour the distressed, like the good Samaritan? Yes: Go thou and do likewise, Luke x. 37.

4. Are we to support the lives of those who are in straits? Yes: The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, Job xxix. 13. Are we to be meek towards those that provoke us? Yes: showing all meekness toward all men, Titus iii. 2. And are we to be merciful toward those who need us? Yes: Put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercy, Col. iii. 12.

Q. 69. *What is forbidden in the sixth commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment forbids the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, and whatsoever tends thereunto.

1. May we dispose of our own lives at our pleasure? No: For surely your blood of your lives will I require, Gen. ix. 5. Is it a sin in any case to kill ourselves? Yes: Do thyself no harm, Acts xvi. 28. Is it an exceeding sinful sin? Yes: it was the sin of Saul and Judas, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. Matt. xxvii. 5. Is it a sin needlessly to expose our own lives? Yes: Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, Matt. iv. 7. But must we not expose our lives to keep a good conscience? Yes: Neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I might finish my course with joy, Acts xx. 24.

2. Is drunkenness a sin against our own lives? Yes: Take heed lest your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares, Luke xxi. 34. Is uncleanness so? Yes: He that commits fornication, sins against his own body, 1 Cor. vi. 18. Is immoderate care and grief a sin against our own lives? Yes: for the sorrow of the world worketh death, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

3. Is it lawful for the magistrate to take away the life of a malefactor? Yes: for he bears not the sword in vain, Rom. xiii. 4. May soldiers kill in a lawful war? Yes: Cursed is he that keepeth back his sword from blood, Jer. xlviii. 10. But is wilful murder a great sin? Yes: The voice of my brother's blood cries, Gen. iv. 10. Is it an iniquity to be punished by the judge? Yes: Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, Gen. ix. 6. And ought the murderer to be put to death? Yes: A man that doeth violence to the blood of any person shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him, Prov. xxviii. 17.

4. Is murder a great affront to God? Yes: for in the image of God made he man, Gen. ix. 6. Does it make men like the devil? Yes: for he was a murderer from the beginning, John viii. 44. Is it of dangerous consequence to the murderer? Yes: for no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, 1 John iii. 15. Ought we therefore to pray that God would keep us from it? Yes: Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God of my salvation, Ps. li. 14.

5. Is malice heart-murder? Yes: he that hateth his brother is a murderer, 1 John iii. 15. Is rash anger a breach of this commandment? Yes: But I say unto you, Whosoever is angry with his brother without cause, shall be in danger of the judgment, Matt. v. 22. Is giving foul language a breach of this commandment? Yes: Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, or Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire, Matt. v. 22. Is revenge a breach of this commandment? Yes: Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, Rom. xii. 19.

Q. 70. *What is the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Does this commandment concern our own and our neighbour's chastity? Yes: for this is the will of God, even our sanctification, 1 Thess. iv. 3. Is it needful there should be such a commandment? Yes: for since all are gone aside, they are all become filthy, Ps. xiv. 3. Is it agreeable to the light of nature? Yes: for Abimelech called adultery a great sin, Gen. xx. 9. And is this command for the public good of mankind? Yes: for whoredom and wine take away the heart, Hos iv. 11.

Q. 71. *What is required in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.

1. Is it our duty to keep our bodies pure from all fleshly lusts? Yes: we must possess our vessel in sanctification and honour, and not in the lust of concupiscence, 1 Thess. iv. 4. Are we to present our bodies to God? Yes: Present your bodies unto God a living sacrifice, Rom. xii. 1. Are we to glorify him with them? Yes: Glorify God with your bodies, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Are we to use them for him? Yes: For your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, 1 Cor. vi. 19. And to employ them in his service? Yes: Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, Rom. vi. 13. May they then be used in the service of our lusts? No: for if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, 1 Cor. iii. 17.

2. Ought we to preserve our chastity in heart? Yes: that we may be holy both in body and spirit, 1 Cor. vii. 34. And must we keep out all unclean

thoughts and desires? Yes: we must flee youthful lusts, 2 Tim. ii. 22. And is that the way to prevent the acts of uncleanness? Yes: for when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin, James i. 15.

3. Ought we to preserve our chastity in speech? Yes: Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, Col. iv. 6. Is it the character of good people to be modest? Yes: I will turn to the people a pure language, Zeph. iii. 9.

4. Ought we to preserve our chastity in behaviour? Yes: we must have a chaste conversation coupled with fear, 1 Pet. iii. 2. And in our clothing? Yes: Women must adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety, 1 Tim. ii. 9. Must we abstain from all appearances of uncleanness? Yes: hating even the garment spotted with the flesh, Jude 23. And from all approaches to it? Yes: Come not nigh the door of her house, Prov. v. 8.

5. Must we resolve against wanton looks? Yes: I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? Job xxxi. 1. Must we always keep our bodies in soberness and chastity? Yes: we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. vii. 1. And must we crucify all the lusts of the flesh? Yes: They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, Gal. v. 24. Must the body be subdued? Yes: I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, 1 Cor. ix. 27. And must its sinful desires be denied? Yes: If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, Matt. v. 29.

Q. 72. *What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?*

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

1. Is adultery a very great sin? Yes: How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Gen. xxix. 9. Is it an iniquity to be punished by the judge? Yes: The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death, Lev. xx. 10. Is fornication a very great sin? Yes: Fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, Eph. v. 3. Will these sins certainly shut men out of heaven, if they be not repented of, and forsaken? Yes: for fornicators and adulterers shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 10.

2. Are unclean thoughts sins? Yes: for whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart, Matt. v. 28. Are unclean reflections sins? Yes: for some multiply their whoredoms by calling to remembrance the days of their youth, Ezek. xxiii. 19. Are unclean desires sins? Yes: inordinate affection, and evil concupiscence, are to be mortified in us, Col. iii. 5. And must all fleshly lusts be shunned? Yes: Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers, and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, 1 Pet. ii. 11.

3. Are unclean words sin? Yes: for there must be neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, Eph. v. 4. Must we therefore take heed of speaking any filthy words? Yes: Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, Eph. iv. 29. May we take delight in hearing filthy talk? No: for evil communications corrupt good manners, 1 Cor. xv. 33.

4. Are all unchaste actions forbidden in this commandment? Yes: not only adultery and fornication, but uncleanness and lasciviousness, (Gal. v. 19.) chambering and wantonness, Rom. xiii. 13. Are the occasions of uncleanness here forbidden? Yes: Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, Eph. v. 11.

5. Is all uncleanness provoking to God? Yes: For I the Lord am holy, Lev. xx. 26. Is it against our bodies? Yes: for the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, 1 Cor. vi. 13. Is it a wrong to our souls? Yes: for fleshly lusts war against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. Is it wounding to conscience? Yes: I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, Eccl. vii. 26.

6. Are idleness and gluttony occasions of uncleanness, and forbidden in this commandment? Yes: for this was the iniquity of Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, Ezek. xvi. 49. And is drunkenness also a sin of dangerous consequence? Yes: for drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. vi. 10.

Q. 73. *What is the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment is, Thou shalt not steal.

1. Does the eighth commandment concern our own and our neighbour's wealth and outward estate? Yes: for the earth God has given to the children of men, Ps. cxv. 16. Is it necessary there should be such a command? Yes: for every brother will utterly supplant, Jer. ix. 4.

2. Is robbing God the worst theft? Yes: Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me, Mal. iii. 8, 9. And is justice to God the highest justice? Yes: Render to God the things that are God's, Matt. xxii. 21.

Q. 74. *What is required in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment requires all lawful procuring and furthering our own and our neighbour's wealth and outward estate.

1. Is religion a friend to outward prosperity? Yes: for in wisdom's left hand are riches and honour, Prov. iii. 16. Does it teach us to be diligent in our callings? Yes: Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks, Prov. xxvii. 23. And to keep close to them? Yes: Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, 1 Thess. iv. 11. And is that the

way to thrive? Yes: for the hand of the diligent maketh rich, Prov. x. 4. Does religion teach us to be prudent in our affairs? Yes: the good man will guide his affairs with discretion, Ps. cxii. 5. And is that the way to thrive? Yes: for through wisdom is a house builded, Prov. xxiv. 3.

2. Must we serve God with our worldly estate? Yes: Honour the Lord with thy substance, Prov. iii. 9. And is that the way to thrive? Yes: So shall thy barn be filled with plenty, *v.* 10. Must we cheerfully use our estates? Yes: For I know no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life, Eccl. iii. 12. And must we cheerfully serve God with them? Yes: we must serve the Lord our God with joyfulness and gladness of heart in the abundance of all things, Deut. xxviii. 47.

3. Must we be just to all we deal with? Yes: Render therefore to all their due, Rom xiii. 7. And must we give every body their own? Yes: Owe no man any thing, but to love one another, Rom. xiii. 8. Must we be true to every trust reposed in us? Yes; as the workmen who dealt faithfully, 2 Kings xii. 15. And is honesty the best policy? Yes: for a little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked, Ps. xxxvii. 16. And shall we have the comfort of it in this world? Yes: He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, that despiseth the gain of oppression, and shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be in the munitions of rocks, bread shall be given him, and his waters shall be sure, Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16. If therefore we have done any wrong, must we make restitution? Yes: Zaccheus stood and said, If I have wronged any man, I restore him fourfold, Luke xix. 8.

4. Must we concern ourselves for the welfare of others? Yes: Look not every one on his own things, but every one also on the things of others, Phil. ii. 4. And must we do all we can to promote the welfare of others? Yes: If thy brother's ox or ass go astray, thou shalt bring them back, Deut. xxii. 1.

5. Must we relieve the poor according to our ability? Yes: If thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen into decay with thee, then thou shalt relieve him, Lev. xxv. 35. Must we be forward to relieve the poor? Yes: We must be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, 1 Tim. vi. 18. Is that the way to thrive in this world? Yes: for he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again, Prov. xix. 17. And shall it be repayed in the other world? Yes: Thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, Luke xiv. 14. And must we make this use of what we have in the world? Yes: we must labour that we may have to give to him that needeth, Eph. iv. 28.

Q. 75. *What is forbidden in the eighth commandment?*

A. The eighth commandment forbids whatsoever does or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth, and outward estate.

1. May we do what we will with our own estates? No: for we are but stewards of the manifold grace of God, 1 Pet. iv. 10. Is it a sin then to waste our estates in prodigality? Yes: for the drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty, Prov. xxiii. 31. Is luxury the way to beggary? Yes: he that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man, Prov. xxi. 17. Is slothfulness a robbing of ourselves? Yes: for he that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster, Prov. xviii. 9. And is that the way to poverty? Yes: for drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags, Prov. xxiii. 21.

2. Is keeping idle company the way to poverty? Yes: for he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough, Prov. xxviii. 19. Is fraud and injustice the way to poverty? Yes: for wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, Prov. xiii. 11. Can any expect to prosper in a way of unjust gain? No: for he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool, Jer. xvii. 11. Do men rob themselves and their families by foolishness in their affairs? Yes: for every wise woman buildeth her house, but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands. Prov. xiv. 1. And by rash suretyship? Yes: for he that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it, Prov. xi. 15.

3. Is it a sin to rob ourselves of the comfort of that which God has given us? Yes: if a man hath not power to eat of it, it is vanity, and an evil disease, Eccl. vi. 2. And is it a sin to deny it to our relations? Yes: if any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel, 1 Tim. v. 8.

4. Is it a great sin to steal from any body? Yes: for every one that stealeth shall be cut off, Zech. v. 3. Is it a great sin for children to steal from their parents? Yes: Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith it is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer, Prov. xxviii. 24. And for the rich to oppress the poor? Yes: Rob not the poor, because he is poor, Prov. xxii. 22. Will you therefore keep your hands from picking and stealing? Yes: because of the fear of God, Neh. v. 15. Must those who have used themselves to it break it off? Yes: Let him that stole steal no more, Eph. iv. 28. Must poor people especially watch and pray against this temptation? Yes: Lest I be poor, and steal, Prov. xxx. 9.

5. Is it a sin to cheat any body in a bargain? Yes: Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, 1 Thess. iv. 6. Is it a sin to use false weights

and measures? Yes: A false balance is abomination to the Lord, Prov. xi. 1. Is it a sin to give assistance or countenance to any fraud? Yes: Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul, Prov. xxix. 24.

6. Is it a sin to deny relief to the poor? Yes: Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in that man? 1 John iii. 17. Is it a sin to deny the payment of a just debt? Yes: for the wicked borroweth, and payeth not again, Ps. xxxvii. 21. Or withhold wages that is due? Yes: the hire of the labourers kept back by fraud crieth, James v. 4. And is the love of money the cause of all these sins? Yes: the love of money is the root of all evil, 1 Tim. vi. 10.

Q. 76. *What is the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment is, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

1. Does this commandment concern our own and our neighbour's good name? Yes: for a good name is better than precious ointment, Eccl. vii. 1. Is there need of this commandment? Yes: for every neighbour will walk with slanders, Jer. ix. 4.

Q. 77. *What is required in the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment requires the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

1. Is it our duty to govern our tongues? Yes: I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue, Ps. xxxix. 1. Is he a good Christian that does not? No: for if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain, James i. 26. Must we therefore pray to God to keep us from tongue-sins? Yes: Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, Ps. cxli. 3.

2. Is it our duty to speak truth? Yes: Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour, Zech. viii. 16. Is there good reason for it? Yes: for we are members one of another, Eph. iv. 25. And is this the character of a good man? Yes: that he speaketh the truth in his heart, Ps. xv. 2. Are all truths to be spoken at all times? No: for there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak, Eccl. iii. 7. But may an untruth be spoken at any time? No: for God's people are children that will not lie, Isa. lxiii. 8.

3. Is it our duty, especially in witness-bearing, to speak truth? Yes: for a faithful witness will not lie, Prov. xiv. 5. And the whole truth? Yes: Samuel told Eli every whit, and hid nothing from him, 1 Sam. iii. 18. And nothing but the truth? Yes: for a lying tongue is but for a moment, Prov. xii. 19.

4. Is it our duty to strive to have a good name with God? Yes: for not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth, 2 Cor. x. 16. And should we endeavour to have a good name with good people? Yes: Let those that fear thee turn unto me, Ps. cxix. 79. And if possible a good name with all people? Yes: Demetrius hath a good report of all men, 3 John 12. Must we abound in those things that are of good report? Yes: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on those things, Phil. iv. 8.

5. In order to our getting a good name, must we live by faith? Yes: for by it the elders obtained a good report, Heb. xi. 2. Must we walk wisely? Yes: for a man's wisdom makes his face to shine, Eccl. viii. 1. Must we do justly? Yes: Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, 1 Pet. ii. 12. And be humble? Yes: for before honour is humility, Prov. xviii. 12. And must we abound in good works? Yes: Let your light so shine before men, Matt. v. 16. But can good people expect to have every one's good word? No: Woe unto you when all men speak well of you, Luke vi. 26. May we hazard a good conscience to preserve our reputation? No: for our praise is not of men, but of God, Rom. ii. 29.

6. Ought we to be very tender of the good names of others? Yes: we must honour all men, 1 Pet. ii. 17. Must we give them the praise of that in them which is good? Yes: We also bear record, 3 John 12. But may we flatter them? No: he that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail, Job xvii. 5. Must we charitably conceal their faults? Yes: for charity covers a multitude of sins, 1 Pet. iv. 8. Must we discourage slandering and censoriousness? Yes: We must with an angry countenance drive away a backbiting tongue, Prov. xxv. 23.

Q. 78. *What is forbidden in the ninth commandment?*

A. The ninth commandment forbids whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or our neighbour's good name.

1. Is lying a great sin? Yes: Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man, Col. iii. 9. Is it a sin that God hates? Yes: lying lips are abomination to the Lord, Prov. xii. 22. And is it a sin that all good men hate? Yes: I hate and abhor lying, Ps. cxix. 163. Does it make men like the devil? Yes: for he is a liar, and the father of it, John viii. 44. And will it bring them to hell? Yes: for all liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, Rev. xxi. 8.

2. Is it lawful to tell a lie to make sport? No: for as a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is he that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport? Prov. xxvi. 18, 19. Is it

lawful to tell a lie to excuse a fault? No: for Gehazi for doing so had a leprosy entailed on him and his seed for ever, 2 Kings v. 27. May we tell a lie with intention to do good? No: We must not do evil, that good may come, Rom. iii. 8. Will what is got by lying do us any good? No: The getting of treasures by a lying tongue is vanity, tossed to and fro of them that seek death, Prov. xxi. 6. Should we therefore pray against this sin? Yes: Remove from me the way of lying, Ps. cxix. 29.

3. Is it a sin to belie ourselves? Yes: As there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches, Prov. xiii. 7. May we be careless of our own good name? No: If I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you, John viii. 55.

4. Is it a sin to belie our neighbour? Yes: They laid to my charge things that I know not, Ps. xxxv. 11. Is it folly? Yes: He that uttereth slander is a fool, Prov. x. 18. Is it a sin to speak evil of any? Yes: Put them in mind to speak evil of no man, Tit. iii. 1, 2. And to be censorious of our brethren? Yes: Judge not, that ye be not judged, Matt. vii. 1. Is it a great offence to God to do this? Yes: He that speaks evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judgeth the law, James iv. 11. Does it make us like the devil? Yes: for he is the accuser of the brethren, Rev. xii. 10.

5. Is it a sin to raise a false report? Yes: Thou shalt not raise a false report, Exod. xxiii. 1. And a sin to spread it? Yes: Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer, Lev. xix. 16. May we proclaim our brethren's faults? No: for charity rejoiceth not in iniquity, 1 Cor. xiii. 6. Is it a sin to speak ill of magistrates? Yes: Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people, Acts xxiii. 5. Is it a sin to be abusive to the poor? Yes: for he that mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker, Prov. xvii. 5. May we speak ill of those who speak ill of us? No: We must not render railing for railing, 1 Pet. iii. 9.

Q. 79. *What is the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment is, Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

1. Does this commandment lay a restraint upon the heart? Yes: for the law is spiritual, Rom. vii. 14. Does the heart need this restraint? Yes: for the inward part is very wickedness, Ps. v. 9. Does the light of nature discover this? No: I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet, Rom. vii. 7.

2. Are we forbidden to covet another man's house? Yes: As they that covet houses and take them away, Mic. ii. 2. Or another man's wife? Yes: for her husband is to her a covering of the eyes, Gen. xx. 16. Or another man's goods? Yes: I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel, Acts xx. 33.

Q. 80. *What is required in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment requires a full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit towards our neighbour, and all that is his.

1. Has God the disposal of our outward condition? Yes: My times are in thy hand, Ps. xxxi. 15. And does he order all events concerning us? Yes: he performeth the thing that is appointed for us, Job xxiii. 14. Ought we therefore to be content with our condition? Yes: Be content with such things as you have, Heb. xiii. v. Ought we to be content in every condition? Yes: I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content, Phil. iv. 11. Must we be content with a little? Yes: Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content, 1 Tim. vi. 8.

2. Can we expect that our condition should be in every thing brought to our mind? No: for all is vanity, Eccl. i. 14. Is it therefore our wisdom to bring our mind to our condition? Yes: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, Phil. iv. 12. Is any thing got by this? Yes: Godliness with contentment is great gain, 1 Tim. vi. 6. And is this the way to be easy? Yes: In your patience possess ye your souls, Luke xxi. 19.

3. Is that best which is? Yes: It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. iii. 18. Must we therefore make the best of it? Yes: for wherefore should a living man complain? Lam. iii. 39. And must we acknowledge it is better than we deserve? Yes: I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, Gen. xxxii. 10.

4. Ought we to desire the welfare of our neighbours? Yes: Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth, 1 Cor. x. 24. And to pray for it? Yes: Supplications and prayers must be made for all men, 1 Tim. ii. 1. And to be well-pleased with it? Yes: Rejoice with them that do rejoice, Rom. xii. 15. And to lay to heart our neighbour's troubles? Yes: Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them, Heb. xiii. 3. And is this a charitable frame of spirit? Yes: for charity suffers long, and is kind, 1 Cor. xiii. 4.

Q. 81. *What is forbidden in the tenth commandment?*

A. The tenth commandment forbids all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate desires and affections to any thing that is his.

1. Is it a sin to fret at the disposals of God's providence? Yes: for shall we receive good of the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil also? Job ii. 10. Is it a sin to quarrel with them? Yes:

for they that murmured were destroyed of the destroyer, 1 Cor. x. 10. Is it an evil thing to undervalue the mercies we have? Yes: as the Israelites that said, There is nothing besides this *manna*, Numb. xi. 6. And to aggravate the afflictions we are under? Yes: as they that said, We die, we perish, we all perish, Numb. xvii. 12. May we in any thing be discontented? No: for we must in every thing give thanks, 1 Thess. v. 18.

2. Is it a sin against this commandment to envy our neighbour's welfare? Yes: for charity envieth not, 1 Cor. xiii. 4. Is envy an offence to God? Yes: for is our eye evil because his is good? Matt. xx. 15. Is it hurtful to ourselves? Yes: for envy is the rottenness of the bones, Prov. xiv. 30. Is it the cause of much mischief? Yes: for where envy is, there is confusion, and every evil work, James iii. 16. Is it a sin to be pleased with our neighbour's hurt or loss? Yes: he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished, Prov. xvii. 5.

3. Is it a sin to desire to sin? Yes: Lust not after evil things, as they also lusted, 1 Cor. x. 6. Does all sin begin in the lustings of the heart? Yes: for lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, James i. 15. Is it a sin to desire any temporal good inordinately? Yes: as Rachel, that said, Give me children, or else I die, Gen. xxx. 1. And is it a sin to lust after the delights of sense? Yes: as the Israelites who wept again, saying, Who will give us flesh to eat? Numb. xi. 4. Must we therefore suppress all sinful desires? Yes: and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, Rom. xiii. 14.

4. Is it a sin to set our hearts upon worldly wealth? Yes: Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world, 1 John ii. 15. Is covetousness an offence to God? Yes: for it is idolatry, Col. iii. 5. Will it be a vexation to ourselves? Yes: for he that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, Eccl. v. 10. Will it be a vexation to our families? Yes: for he that is greedy of gain troubles his own house, Prov. xv. 27.

And injurious to our neighbour? Yes: for they that lay house to house, and field to field, would be placed alone in the midst of the earth, Isa. v. 8. Is covetousness the cause of much sin? Yes: for they that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, 1 Tim. vi. 9. Must we therefore watch against it? Yes: Take heed, and beware of covetousness, Luke xii. 15. And must we abstain from all the practices of it? Yes: Let your conversation be without covetousness, Heb. xiii. 5. And must we pray earnestly against it? Yes: Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness, Ps. cxix. 36.

Q. 82. *Is any man able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

A. No mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but does daily break them in thought, word, or deed.

1. Are any in this world perfectly free from sin? No: for there is no man that sinneth not, 2 Chron. vi. 36. Was Christ, who was not a mere man, perfect? Yes: he knew no sin, 2 Cor. v. 21. Was Adam before the fall perfect? Yes: for God made man upright, Eccl. vii. 29. Are the saints in the other life perfect? Yes: the glorious church is without spot or wrinkle, Eph. v. 27. But is any mere man since the fall in this life perfect? No: for there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not, Eccl. vii. 20.

2. Are self-justifiers self-deceivers? Yes: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, 1 John i. 8. And do they put a great affront upon God? Yes: for if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, 1 John i. 10.

3. Are not we able to keep God's commandments better than we do? Yes: If I have done iniquity, I will do no more, Job xxxiv. 32. But are we able perfectly to keep them? No: For when I would do good, evil is present with me, Rom. vii. 21. Though Noah was said to be perfect, yet did not he sin? Yes: for he drank of the wine, and was drunk, Gen. ix. 21. And Job? Yes: for he cursed his day, Job iii. 1. And Hezekiah? Yes: for his heart was lifted up, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. Was St. Paul himself perfect? No: Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, Phil. iii. 12.

4. Do we sin daily? Yes: in many things we offend all, Jam. iii. 2. Do we daily sin in thought? Yes: for, The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, Gen. viii. 21. Are we guilty of many tongue-sins? Yes: In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin, Prov. x. 19. Are the best guilty of many defects? Yes: for when the spirit is willing the flesh is weak, Matt. xxvi. 41. And of many inadvertencies? Yes: They are overtaken in a fault, Gal. vi. 1. Can we tell how often we offend? No: who can understand his errors? Ps. xix. 13. Should we not therefore have recourse to Christ daily by faith and repentance? Yes: If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, 1 John ii. 1.

Q. 83. *Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

A. Some sins in themselves, and, by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

1. Is every sin done in God's sight? Yes: I did this evil in thy sight, Ps. li. 4. Is it heinous in God's sight? Yes: for he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, Hab. i. 13. But is every sin alike heinous? No: He that delivered me unto thee hath

the greater sin, John xix. 11. Are some sins in themselves more heinous than others? Yes: If a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him? 1 Sam. ii. 25. Are presumptuous sins more heinous than others? Yes: the soul that doeth aught presumptuously, that soul reproacheth the Lord, Numb. xv. 30. Was ever any sin so heinous as not to be forgiven? Yes: the Pharisees' blasphemy against the Holy Ghost was so, Matt. xii. 32.

2. Are sins against knowledge aggravated sins? Yes: that servant that knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes, Luke xii. 47. And sins against mercies? Yes: Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise? Deut. xxxii. 6. Especially against spiritual mercies? Yes: As Solomon, who turned from the Lord God of Israel which had appeared unto him twice, 1 Kings xi. 9. Are sins against reproof aggravated sins? Yes: He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, Prov. xxix. 1. And sins against our vows and covenants? Yes: Thou saidst, I will not transgress, Jer. ii. 20.

3. Are the sins of great professors aggravated sins? Yes: for the name of God is blasphemed through them, Rom. ii. 24. And the sins of ministers? Yes: Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Rom. ii. 21. May the place be an aggravation of the sin? Yes: They provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea, Ps. cvi. 7. And the time? Yes: They turned aside quickly, Exod. xxxii. 8.

4. Is it an aggravation of sin, if it be done with contrivance? Yes: Woe to them that devise iniquity, Mic. ii. 1. And if it be done with delight? Yes: They rejoice to do evil, Prov. ii. 14. And without blushing? Yes: They declare their sin as Sodom, Isa. iii. 9. And if it be boasted of? Yes: Whose glory is in their shame, Phil. iii. 19. And if it be often repeated? Yes: They have tempted me now these ten times, Num. xiv. 22. Should we take notice of these aggravations in our confessions? Yes: Aaron shall confess the iniquity of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, Lev. xvi. 21.

Q. 84. *What does every sin deserve?*

A. Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse, both in this life, and that which is to come.

1. Does sin provoke God? Yes: Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly, Hos. xii. 14. Does it deserve his wrath? Yes: According to their deserts will I judge them, Ezek. vii. 27. Does that wrath rest upon impenitent sinners? Yes: The wrath of God abideth on them, John iii. 36. And is it just it should? Yes: For when God renders to every man according to his work, he renders indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man that doeth evil, Rom. ii. 6, 8.

2. Does sin deserve God's curse? Yes: Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. iii. 10. Can any avoid that curse? No: For all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, Deut. xxviii. 15. Can a man bear up under that curse? No: for it shall come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones, Ps. cix. 18. Can a man fortify himself against that curse? No: for it shall consume the house, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof, Zech. v. 4.

3. Does sin deserve God's wrath and curse in this life? Yes: for these things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, Col. iii. 6. And in the life to come? Yes: for wrath is treasured up against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 5. Does every sin deserve God's wrath? Yes: for the wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. 23. Is any sin venial in its own nature? No: for the blood of Christ is that which must cleanse from all sin, 1 John i. 7. Does your sin deserve this wrath and curse? Yes: If I be wicked, woe to me, Job x. 15.

Q. 85. *What does God require of us, that we may escape the wrath and curse due to us for sin?*

A. To escape the wrath and anger of God due to us for sin, God requires of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with a diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption.

1. Is the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin? Yes: we are by nature children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3. Has God provided a way of escape from that wrath? Yes: I have found a ransom, Job xxxiii. 24. Does the gospel show us that way? Yes: He shall tell the words whereby thou mayest be saved, Acts xi. 14. Is it through Christ that we may escape this wrath? Yes: It is Jesus that delivereth us from the wrath to come, 1 Thess. i. 10. Is any thing to be done by us in order to our escape? Yes: Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you, Phil. ii. 12, 13.

2. Are we concerned to inquire what is to be done by us in order to our escape? Yes: Wherewithal shall I come before the Lord? Mic. vi. 6. Will a convinced conscience put us upon this inquiry? Yes: When they were pricked to the heart they said, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Acts ii. 37. Must we be serious and solicitous in this inquiry? Yes: as the gaoler that came trembling and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? Acts xvi. 30. Must we be speedy in this inquiry? Yes: The morning cometh, and also the night, if ye will inquire, inquire ye, Isa. xxi. 12. Must we make this inquiry with resolution? Yes: They shall ask their way to Sion with their faces thitherward, Jer. l. 5. Must we apply ourselves to Christ with this inquiry? Yes: Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? Matt. xix. 16.

3. Is that which is to be done by us for our salvation required of us? Yes: This is his commandment, That we believe, 1 John iii. 23. And are we called upon to do it? Yes: Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel? Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

4. Is faith in Jesus Christ required that we may escape this wrath? Yes: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, Acts xvi. 31. Is repentance required? Yes: Repent, and be converted, that our sins may be blotted, Acts iii. 19. Did our Lord Jesus preach these as the two great commandments of the gospel? Yes: The kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel, Mark i. 15. Did the apostles preach them? Yes: testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts xx. 21. And is it required that we diligently use the means of grace? Yes: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, Matt. xxviii. 20.

Q. 86. *What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

1. Are we to believe in Jesus Christ? Yes: Ye believe in God, believe also in me, John xiv. 1. Is Christ in the word the object of our faith? Yes: For the word is nigh thee, Rom. x. 8. Is faith in Christ a grace? Yes: it is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8. Is it free grace? Yes: To you it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe in him, Phil. i. 29. Is it a saving grace? Yes: for we believe to the saving of the soul, Heb. x. 39. Is it that by which we live? Yes: The just shall live by his faith, Rom. i. 17. Is unbelief the great damning sin? Yes: They could not enter in because of unbelief, Heb. iii. 19.

2. Do we by faith assent to gospel truths? Yes: He that has received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true, John iii. 33. Do we by faith consent to gospel terms? Yes: Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, Matt. xi. 29. Must both these go together? Yes: He said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him, John ix. 38. Is there good reason for both? Yes: for it is both a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, 1 Tim. i. 15.

3. Is this receiving Christ? Yes: Ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, Col. ii. 6. Is it applying the righteousness of Christ to ourselves? Yes: Who loved me, and gave himself for me, Gal. ii. 20. And consenting to it? Yes: We have now received the atonement, Rom. v. 11. Must we receive Christ to rule us as well as to save us? Yes: For him hath God exalted to be both a Prince and a Saviour, Acts v. 31. And is it enough only to receive him? No: as we have received him, so we must walk in him, Col. ii. 6.

4. Do we by faith rest on Christ alone for salvation? Yes: in his name shall the Gentiles trust, Matt. xii. 21. And rely on his righteousness? Yes: That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, Phil. iii. 9. And do we rejoice in him? Yes: for we are the circumcision that rejoice in Christ Jesus, Phil. iii. 3.

5. Will faith in Christ produce good affections? Yes: for it works by love, Gal. v. 6. Will it purify the heart? Yes: Purifying their hearts by faith, Acts xv. 9. Will it overcome the world? Yes: This is the victory, overcoming the world, even your faith, 1 John v. 4. Will it resist the temptations of Satan? Yes: the shield of faith quenches the fiery darts of the wicked, Eph. vi. 16. Does it exert itself in obedience? Yes: for the gospel is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. xvi. 26. And does it subject the soul to the grace and government of the Lord Jesus? Yes: My Lord, and my God, John xx. 28.

Q. 87. *What is repentance unto life?*

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does with grief and hatred of his sin turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.

1. Is true repentance, repentance unto life? Yes: God hath to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, Acts xi. 18. Is it a grace? Yes: If God peradventure will give them repentance, 2 Tim. ii. 25. Is it a saving grace? Yes: godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

2. Is repentance required of every one of us? Yes: God commandeth all men every where to repent, Acts xvii. 30. Is it necessary to our pardon? Yes: for repentance and remission of sins are preached to all nations, Luke xxiv. 47. Is it given to qualify us for pardon? Yes: God hath exalted his Son Christ Jesus, to give repentance and remission of sins, Acts v. 31. Can we be saved without it? No: Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish, Luke xiii. 3.

3. Is it necessary to repentance, that there be a sense of sin? Yes: Cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, Ezek. xvi. 2. Must there be an acknowledgment of sin? Yes: I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me, Ps. li. 3. Must we acknowledge the fact of sin? Yes: Thus and thus have I done, Josh. vii. 20. And the fault? Yes: I have done this evil in thy sight, Ps. li. 4. And the folly of it? Yes: O God, thou knowest my foolishness, Ps. lxix. 5. Must we acknowledge the original of sin? Yes: Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, Ps. li. 5. Must we acknowledge

ourselves odious to God's holiness because of sin? Yes: Behold I am vile, Job xl. 4. And obnoxious to his justice? Yes: If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand, Ps. cxxx. 3.

4. Must there be an apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ? Yes: There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared, Ps. cxxx. 4. Must that invite us to repent? Yes: The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. Is that evangelical repentance which flows from a hope of that mercy? Yes: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, Matt. iii. 2. Can there be true repentance where there is a despair of mercy? No: Thou saidst there is hope; no, I have loved strangers, and after them will I go, Jer. ii. 25. Have we reason to hope for that mercy? Yes: Turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy, Isa. lv. 7.

5. Must there be contrition for sin? Yes: When they heard this, they were pricked to the heart, Acts ii. 37. Must we turn from sin? Yes: Every one mourning for his iniquities, Ezek. vii. 16. Must we mourn greatly for sin? Yes: Peter went out and wept bitterly, Matt. xxvi. 75. Must we mourn after a godly sort? Yes: Ye sorrowed according to God, 2 Cor. vii. 9. marg. Must we mourn for sin with an eye to Christ? Yes: They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zech. xii. 10.

6. Must we hate sin? Yes: I hate every false way, Ps. cxix. 128. Must we loathe ourselves because of sin? Yes: I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes, Job xlii. 6. Must we be ashamed of ourselves before God? Yes: I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God, Ezra ix. 6. And must we humble ourselves greatly in his presence? Yes: as the publican that stood afar off, and would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, Luke xviii. 13.

7. Must we confess our sins? Yes: for he that covers his sins shall not prosper, Prov. xxviii. 13. And must we aggravate them? Yes: I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, Luke xv. 18. And must we judge ourselves because of them? Yes: If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, 1 Cor. xi. 31. And must we cry earnestly to God for pardon in the blood of Christ? Yes: God be merciful to me a sinner, Luke xviii. 13.

8. Must we turn from sin? Yes: Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, Ezek. xviii. 30. From our own sin? Yes: Return ye now every one from his evil way, Jer. xviii. 11. And must we turn to God? Yes: If thou wilt return, O Israel, return unto me, Jer. iv. 1. Are backsliders invited to return? Yes: Return, ye backsliding children, Jer. iii. 22. And should they accept the invitation? Yes: Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord, our Lord, Jer. iii. 22.

9. In repentance must there be a change of the mind? Yes: Make ye a new heart, Ezek. xviii. 31. Must there be a change of the way? Yes: Cease to do evil, learn to do well, Isa. i. 16, 17. Must there be a full resolution against all sin? Yes: Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? Hos. xiv. 8. And a full resolution of new obedience: Yes: The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey, Josh. xxiv. 24. And must we be serious in our endeavours accordingly? Yes: Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance, Matt. iii. 8.

Q. 88. *What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption?*

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

1. Does Christ communicate the benefits of redemption? Yes: for of his fulness have all we received, John i. 16. Does he ordinarily communicate them by means? Yes: I will for this be inquired of, Ezek. xxxvi. 37. Is he tied to those means? No: for the Spirit, as the wind, bloweth where he listeth, John iii. 8. But are we tied to the use of them? Yes: Where I record my name, I will come to thee, and will bless thee, Exod. xx. 24. Are the ordinances the outward and ordinary means of grace? Yes: I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them, Ezek. xxxvii. 28.

2. Are the word, sacraments, and prayer, the great gospel ordinances? Yes: Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers, Acts ii. 41, 42. Is singing of psalms also a gospel ordinance? Yes: Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, Eph. v. 19. Is it appointed for our own consolation? Yes: Is any merry, let him sing psalms, Jam. v. 13. And for mutual instruction? Yes: Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, Col. iii. 16. And for God's glory? Yes: Singing with grace in your heart to the Lord, Col. iii. 16.

3. Has Christ appointed ministers of the gospel? Yes: he hath given pastors and teachers for the edifying of the body of Christ, Eph. iv. 11, 12. Is the administration of ordinances committed to them? Yes: for they are the stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1. And must they attend that service? Yes: We will give ourselves to prayer, and to the ministry of the word, Acts vi. 4.

4. Are gospel ordinances made effectual to all for salvation? No: for with many of them God was not well pleased, 1 Cor. x. 5. But are they made effectual to the elect? Yes: As many as were ordained to eternal life believed, Acts xiii. 48.

Q. 89. *How is the word made effectual to salvation?*

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching, of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.

1. Is the word to be read by us? Yes: I charge you that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren, 1 Thess. v. 27. Is it to be read in solemn assemblies? Yes: Moses is read in the synagogues every sabbath day, Acts xv. 21. Is it profitable to expound the Scriptures? Yes: They that read in the law of God, gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading, Neh. viii. 8. Is the word of God to be preached? Yes: Preach the word, be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, 2 Tim. iv. 2. Is it the duty of all to hear the word? Yes: He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, Rev. ii. 7. Will the bare reading and hearing of the word profit? No: the letter kills, the spirit gives life, 2 Cor. iii. 6.

2. But is the reading and hearing of the word the ordinary means of convincing sinners? Yes: for it is mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, 2 Cor. x. 4. And of startling the secure? Yes: by them is thy servant warned, Ps. xix. 11. Is it the ordinary means of conversion? Yes: If the prophets had stood in my counsel, they should have turned people from their evil way, Jer. xxiii. 22. And has it been the conversion of many? Yes: When the law of truth was in his mouth, he did turn many away from iniquity, Mal. ii. 6. Is it the ordinary means of working faith? Yes: for faith comes by hearing, Rom. x. 17. And of renewing of the heart? Yes: for the seed is the word of God, Luke viii. 11. And of reforming the life? Yes: By the words of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer, Ps. xvii. 4.

3. Is the reading and hearing of the word needful to those who are regenerate? Yes: for they are nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, 1 Tim. iv. 6. Is it a means of building them up in holiness? Yes: it is for the perfecting of the saints, Eph. iv. 12. Will it furnish them for all good? Yes: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works, 2 Tim. iii. 17. Will it fortify them against all evil? Yes: for the sword of the Spirit is the word of God, Eph. vi. 17. Is it a means of building them up in comfort? Yes: That we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope, Rom. xv. 4.

4. Does the Spirit of God make the word effectual for all these good purposes? Yes: When the hand of the Lord was with them, a great number believed, and turned to the Lord, Acts xi. 21. Is it effectual through faith unto salvation? Yes: It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes, Rom. i. 16. Is it not a great mercy then to have plenty of the word of God? Yes: Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound, Ps. lxxxix. 15. And should we not welcome those that bring it? Yes: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Ps. cxviii. 26.

Q. 90. *How is the word to be read and heard that it may become effectual to salvation?*

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practise it in our lives.

1. Must we read the word of God with seriousness? Yes: we must give attendance to reading, 1 Tim. iv. 13. And not read it as a common book? No: It is not a vain thing, for it is your life, Deut. xxxii. 47.

2. Must we be diligent to hear the word? Yes: Watching daily at Wisdom's gates, waiting at the posts of her doors, Prov. viii. 34. Must we prepare for hearing it? Yes: Lay aside all malice, and guile, and hypocrisy, and filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, 1 Pet. ii. 1. Must we come to it with a spiritual appetite? Yes: as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Must we set ourselves to receive it? Yes: as Mary sat at Jesus' feet to hear his word, Luke x. 39. Must we bow our souls before it? Yes: Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears, 1 Sam. iii. 9. Must we diligently hearken to it? Yes: Be swift to hear, Jam. i. 19.

3. Must we hear the word with reverence? Yes: When Ezra opened the book all the people stood up, Neh. viii. 5. Must we hear it with care? Yes: Take heed how ye hear, Luke viii. 18. And with meekness? Yes: Receive with meekness the engrafted word, Jam. i. 21. And with delight? Yes: How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Ps. cxix. 103. And with a holy fear? Yes: we must tremble at the word, Isa. lxvi. 2. Must we receive it as the word of men? No: but as it is in truth, the word of God, 1 Thess. ii. 13.

4. Must we take heed of sleeping under the word? Yes: Could ye not watch with me one hour? Matt. xxvi. 40. Must we pray for a blessing upon the word? Yes: Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law, Ps. cxix. 18. Must we receive the word with faith? Yes: for it will not profit if it be not mixed with faith, Heb. iv. 2. Must we receive men's words with an implicit faith? No: Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, 1 John iv. 1. But must we receive God's word with an implicit faith? Yes: for every word of God is pure, Prov. xxx. 5. Must we receive it with love? Yes: I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food, Job xxiii. 12.

5. Must we remember the word we read and hear? Yes: lest at any time we let it slip, Heb. ii. 1. Must we lay it up in our hearts? Yes: Thy word have I hid in my heart, Ps. cxix. 11. Must we meditate on it? Yes: In that law doth he meditate day and night, Ps. i. 2. Must we practise it in our lives? Yes: Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, James i. 22. Will it suffice to hear, though we do not practise? No: If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them, John xiii. 17.

Q. 91. *How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?*

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him who administers them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of the Spirit in them, who by faith receive them.

1. Do the sacraments certainly save all that partake of them? No: They who were rejected of Christ could say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, Luke xiii. 26. Are they then effectual by any virtue in themselves? No: for bodily exercise profits little, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Do they of themselves confer grace? No: for if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision, Rom. ii. 25. Is the thing signified of greater consequence than the sign? Yes: for circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, Rom. ii. 29.

2. Does the efficacy of the sacraments depend upon the minister? No: for who is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed? 1 Cor. iii. 5. Does the goodness of the minister invigorate the sacrament? No: for Philip baptized Simon, who yet was in the gall of bitterness, Acts viii. 13, 23. Does the badness of the minister invalidate the sacrament? No: For Judas was numbered with us, and obtained part of this ministry, Acts i. 17.

3. Does the efficacy of sacraments depend upon the blessing of Christ? Yes: Lo, I am with you always, Matt. xxviii. 20. And upon the working of the Spirit? Yes: for it is the Spirit that quickeneth, John vi. 63. And are they effectual to those only who by faith receive them? Yes: He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved, Mark xvi. 16.

Q. 92. *What is a sacrament?*

A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

1. Is a sacrament a holy ordinance? Yes: For we minister about holy things, 1 Cor. ix. 13. Must they therefore be holy that attend them? Yes: Be ye clean that bear the vessel of the Lord, Isa. lii. 11. Are sacraments instituted by Christ? Yes: The Lord himself shall give you a sign, Isa. vii. 14. May men institute sacraments? No: Jeroboam, that ordained a feast which he had devised of his own heart, sinned, and made Israel to sin, 1 Kings xii. 33.

2. Is there in a sacrament an outward and visible sign? Yes: Behold the blood of the covenant, Exod. xxiv. 8. Is there an inward and spiritual grace? Yes: for that Rock was Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4. Are outward signs of use to inform our understandings? Yes: for in them Christ is evidently set forth crucified among us, Gal. iii. 1. Are they of use to refresh our memories? Yes: these stones shall be for a memorial, Josh. iv. 7. And to stir up our affections? Yes: They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zech. xii. 10. Are they of use to transmit the things of God from generation to generation? Yes: For your children shall ask you, What mean you by this service? Exod. xii. 26.

5. Is a sacrament a seal? Yes: Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness which is by faith, Rom. iv. 11. A seal of the covenant? Yes: He gave him the covenant of circumcision, Acts vii. 8. Is a sacrament an oath? Yes: They entered into an oath to walk in God's law, Neh. x. 29. Is it an encouragement to our faith? Yes: Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing, John xx. 27. Is it an engagement to obedience? Yes: That henceforth we should not serve sin, Rom. vi. 6. Is Christ applied to us in sacraments? Yes: As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. Are the benefits of the new covenant applied to us? Yes: To be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee, Gen. xvii. 7.

Q. 93. *Which are the sacraments of the New Testament?*

A. The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper.

1. Were there sacraments in innocency? Yes: The tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Gen. ii. 9. Were there sacraments under the law? Yes: for the law had a shadow of good things to come, Heb. x. 1. Was circumcision a sacrament? Yes: He received the sign of circumcision, Rom. iv. 11. Was the passover a sacrament? Yes: Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7.

2. Have we sacraments now under the gospel? Yes: for unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them, Heb. iv. 2. Are baptism and the Lord's supper our two sacraments? Yes: for we are baptized into one body, and all drink into one spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13. May men add any more sacraments? No: Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, Prov. xxx. 6.

Q. 94. *What is baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing

with water, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, does signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

1. Is washing with water the outward sign in baptism? Yes: I am come baptizing with water, John i. 31. Is that well done by sprinkling? Yes: For so shall he sprinkle many nations, Isa. lii. 15. Ezek. xxx. 25. Is that sign significant? Yes: If ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified, 1 Cor. vi. 11. But is the outward sign alone sufficient? No: Baptism saves us, not as it is the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

2. Must baptism be in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Yes: Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Matt. xxviii. 19. And not in the minister's name? No: Were ye baptized in the name of Paul? 1 Cor. i. 13. Is it therefore one? Yes: for there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, Eph. iv. 5.

3. Is baptism a door of admission into the visible church? Yes: There were added to the church daily, Acts ii. 47. Are we thereby entered into Christ's school? Yes: Jesus made and baptized disciples, John iv. 1. And listed under his banner? Yes: as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, 2 Tim. ii. 3.

4. Is baptism a seal of our ingrafting into Christ? Yes: for being baptized into Jesus Christ, we are baptized into his death, Rom. vi. 3. And of our partaking of the benefits of the new covenant? Yes: Be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. 38. And of our engagement to be the Lord's? Yes: I entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine, Ezek. xvi. 8. Is the covenant sealed in the baptism a mutual covenant? Yes: Ye shall be my people, and I will be your God, Jer. xxx. 22.

5. Are we bound by our baptism to renounce the devil and all his works? Yes: for the Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8. And to renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world? Yes: for we must not be conformed to this world, Rom. xii. 2. And all the sinful lusts of the flesh? Yes: for we are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, Rom. viii. 9. Are we bound to believe all the articles of the Christian faith? Yes: we must hold fast the form of sound words, 2 Tim. i. 13. And to keep God's holy will and commandments? Yes: that we also should walk in newness of life, Rom. vi. 4. And to walk in the same all the days of our life? Yes: If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, John viii. 31.

Q. 95. *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized.

1. Are Jews and Pagans to be baptized upon their believing? Yes: If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest, Acts viii. 37. Will their justifiable profession warrant the administering of baptism to them? Yes: Simon Magus himself believed also, and was baptized, Acts viii. 13.

2. Are the children of believing parents to be baptized in their infancy? Yes: for a seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation, Ps. xxii. 30. Is it possible that they may be in covenant with God? Yes: For you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, John xv. 16. Is it probable they should be in covenant? Yes: For when Israel was a child, then I loved him, Hos. xi. 1. Is it certain they were in covenant? Yes: I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed, Gen. xvii. 7. Is it therefore certain they are in covenant? Yes: for the blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles, Gal. iii. 14. Does the seal of the covenant therefore belong to them? Yes: Every man-child among you shall be circumcised, Gen. xvii. 10.

3. Are the children of Christians members of Christ's visible church? Yes: for of such is the kingdom of God, Mark x. 14. Do the promises belong to them? Yes: the promise is to you and to your children, Acts ii. 39. Does the promise of the Spirit belong to them? Yes: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, Isa. xliv. 3. Are they capable of receiving it? Yes: John was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, Luke i. 15. Are they then to be baptized? Yes: For who can forbid water to them which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? Acts x. 47.

4. Are the children of believers federally holy? Yes: Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Are they so in their parents' right? Yes: if the root be holy, so are the branches, Rom. xi. 16. Are they disciples? Yes: for the yoke of circumcision was put upon the neck of the disciples, Acts xv. 1, 10. Are they to be received in Christ's name? Yes: Whosoever receiveth one such little child in my name, receiveth me, Matt. xviii. 5. Are they born unto God? Yes: Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, Ezek. xvi. 20. Are they bound by relation to be his servants? Yes: I am thy servant the son of thine handmaid, Ps. cxvi. 16. Ought they then to be presented to him? Yes: The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me, Exod. xxii. 29.

5. Do children need to be cleansed from the pol-

lutions of sin? Yes: for they are shapen in iniquity, Ps. li. 5. Is there provision made for their cleansing? Yes: for there is a fountain opened to the house of David, Zech. xiii. 1.

6. Are the nations to be discipled by baptism? Yes: Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them, Matt. xxviii. 19. Are children a part of the nations? Yes: Your little ones stand here this day, to enter into covenant with God, Deut. xxix. 11, 12. And has Christ excepted them? No: Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, Matt. xix. 14. Were the families of believers baptized by the apostles? Yes: Lydia was baptized, and her household, Acts xvi. 15. Did Christ himself receive the seal of the covenant in his infancy? Yes: When he was eight days old he was circumcised, Luke ii. 21.

7. Is infant baptism useful for preserving the church? Yes: That our children may not cease from fearing the Lord, Josh. xxii. 25. Was it a great mercy to you that you were baptized? Yes: For we are the children of the covenant, Acts iii. 25.

8. Must we be careful to improve our baptism? Yes: Be ye mindful always of his covenant, 1 Chron. xvi. 15. Is it a good argument against sin? Yes: How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Rom. vi. 2. And for holiness? Yes: for we also should walk in newness of life, Rom. vi. 4. Is it a great encouragement to faith? Yes: Thou art my God from my mother's belly, Ps. xxii. 10. Is it a good plea in prayer? Yes: Save the son of thy handmaid, Ps. lxxxvi. 16. Is it a strong inducement to brotherly love? Yes: for we all are baptized into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13.

Q. 96. *What is the Lord's Supper?*

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth, and the worthy receivers are not after a corporeal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

1. Was the Lord's supper instituted by Christ himself? Yes: I received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you, 1 Cor. xi. 23. Did he leave it as a legacy to his church? Yes: it was in the night wherein he was betrayed, 1 Cor. xi. 23. Did he intend it should continue? Yes: till he come, v. 26.

2. Is bread to be used in this sacrament? Yes: for he took bread, Matt. xxvi. 26. And does that signify it to be a strengthening ordinance? Yes: for bread strengthens man's heart, Ps. civ. 15. Is the cup to be used in this sacrament? Yes: He took the cup when he had supped, 1 Cor. xi. 25. Does that signify it to be a refreshing ordinance? Yes: for wine makes glad the heart, Ps. civ. 15. Must these be given and received? Yes: Jesus took bread, and gave to them,—took the cup, and gave it to them, Matt. xiv. 22, 23. Are the people to partake of the cup? Yes: Drink ye all of it, Matt. xxvi. 27. Is the ordinance doubled? Yes: because the thing is established, Gen. xli. 32.

3. Does the bread signify the body of Christ? Yes: This is my body which is broken for you, 1 Cor. xi. 24. Does the wine signify the blood of Christ? Yes: This cup is the New Testament in my blood, Luke xxii. 20. Are they turned into the very body and blood of Christ? No: for it is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing, John vi. 63. But is the doctrine of Christ crucified meat and drink to a believing soul? Yes: My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed, John vi. 55. And are we to feed upon that doctrine? Yes: He that eateth me, even he shall live by me, John vi. 57.

4. Is the Lord's supper a commemorating ordinance? Yes: Do this in remembrance of me, Luke xxii. 19. Is it a confessing ordinance? Yes: Ye do show the Lord's death, 1 Cor. xi. 26. Is it a communicating ordinance? Yes: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 1 Cor. v. 16. Is it a covenanting ordinance? Yes: for it is the New Testament, 1 Cor. vi. 25. Is it a confirming ordinance? Yes: for Christ in it is evidently set forth, Gal. iii. 9. Is it an ordinance of communion with all Christians? Yes: for we have been all made to drink into one spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 13.

5. Is the pardon of sin sealed to believers in this sacrament? Yes: it is the blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins, Matt. xxvi. 28. Is the gift of the Holy Ghost sealed to them? Yes: Receive ye the Holy Ghost, John xx. 22. Is the promise of eternal life sealed to them? Yes: That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, Luke xxii. 30. Matt. xxvi. 29. Do we, by receiving this sacrament, bind ourselves out from all sin? Yes: for we reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, Rom. vi. 11. And do we bind ourselves up to all duty? Yes: for being made free from sin, we become the servants of righteousness, Rom. vi. 18.

6. Is the Lord's supper a spiritual feast? Yes: a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, Isa. xxvi. 6. Is it a marriage-feast? Yes: A certain king made a marriage for his son, Matt. xxii. 2. Is it a feast upon a sacrifice? Yes: Christ is sacrificed for us, let us keep the feast, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. Is it a feast upon a covenant? Yes: As Isaac made a feast for Abimelech when they sware one to another, Gen. xxvi. 30, 31. Are all good Christians invited to this feast? Yes: Come, for all things are now ready, Luke xiv. 17. Are they often to partake of

it? Yes: As often as ye eat this bread, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Q. 97. *What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper.*

A. It is required of them who would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience, lest coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

1. Are the ignorant to be admitted to the Lord's supper? No: for they discern not the Lord's body, 1 Cor. xi. 29. Are those to be admitted to it who are openly profane? No: for what concord hath Christ with Belial? 2 Cor. vi. 15. But must all visible adult believers be admitted to it? Yes: All the congregation of Israel shall keep the passover, Exod. xii. 47.

2. Must those who come to the Lord's supper prepare for it? Yes: We must prepare our heart to seek God, the Lord God of our fathers, 2 Chron. xiii. 18. Must we put away every sin? Yes: Purge out the old leaven, 1 Cor. v. 7. And must we cleanse ourselves from all pollutions? Yes: I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord, Ps. xxvi. 6. Must we sequester ourselves from the world? Yes: Tarry ye here, while I go yonder and worship, Gen. xxii. 5. And must we apply ourselves seriously to this service? Yes: We must engage the heart to approach unto God, Jer. xxx. 21.

3. When we come to this ordinance must we examine ourselves? Yes: Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, 1 Cor. xi. 28. Must we examine our spiritual state? Yes: Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Must we examine our particular ways? Yes: Let us search and try our ways, Lam. iii. 40. Must we renew our repentance for sin? Yes: for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, 1 Cor. xi. 31. And our faith in Christ crucified? Yes: Who loved me and gave himself for me, Gal. ii. 20. Must we stedfastly purpose to lead a new life? Yes: I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments, Ps. cx. 106. And must we be in charity with all men? Yes: First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift, Matt. v. 24. And must we stir up desires towards Christ? Yes: Let him that is athirst come, Rev. xxii. 17.

4. Must we receive this sacrament with great reverence? Yes: In thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple, Ps. v. 7. And with fixedness of thought? Yes: Bind the sacrifice with cords unto the horns of the altar, Ps. cxviii. 27. Must we receive it with godly sorrow for sin? Yes: they shall look on me whom they have pierced, and mourn, Zech. xii. 10. And with holy joy in the Lord? Yes: they did eat their meat with gladness, praising God, Acts ii. 46, 47. Must we receive it with an affectionate remembrance of the love of Christ? Yes: We will remember thy love more than wine, Cant. i. 4. And with an earnest desire of mercy from God? Yes: I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord, Ps. cxvi. 13.

5. Must those who have received this sacrament be very watchful against all sin? Yes: He will speak peace to his people, and to his saints, but let them not turn again to folly, Ps. lxxxv. 8. Must they abound in all duty? Yes: I will pay my vows unto the Lord, Ps. cxvi. 14. And must they ever preserve a sense of their engagements? Yes: Thy vows are upon me, O God, Ps. lvi. 12.

6. Do those who wilfully resolve to continue in sin receive unworthily? Yes: For what hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, Ps. l. 16, 17. And do those receive unworthily who have no regard to Christ in what they do? Yes: for they say the table of the Lord is contemptible, Mal. i. 7. Are they that do so guilty of a great sin? Yes: they are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, 1 Cor. xi. 27. And are they in great danger? Yes: for they eat and drink judgment to themselves, 1 Cor. xi. 29. But shall weak believers, who bewail their unworthiness, be encouraged? Yes: for he will not break the bruised reed, Matt. xii. 20.

Q. 98. *What is prayer?*

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

1. Is it every one's duty to pray? Yes: Men ought always to pray, Luke xviii. 1. Can a man be a good man who lives without prayer? No: Every one that is godly shall pray, Ps. xxxii. 6. Are we to pray daily? Yes: Morning, and evening, and at noon, will I pray, Ps. lv. 17. Are we to pray continually? Yes: Pray without ceasing, 1 Thess. v. 17. Are we to pray in secret? Yes: Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy door, Matt. vi. 6. Are we to pray when we are in affliction? Yes: Is any among you afflicted, let him pray, James v. 13.

2. Are we to pray to God only? Yes: for he only knows the hearts of all the children of men, 1 Kings viii. 39. May we pray to departed saints to pray for us? No: for Abraham is ignorant of us, Isa. lxiii. 16. Is prayer the soul's ascent to God? Yes: Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, Ps. xxv. 1. Is it the soul's converse with God? Yes: Pour out your hearts before him, Ps. lxii. 8. Are we in prayer to ascribe glory to God? Yes: Give unto the Lord glory and strength, Ps. xcvi. 7. And

to ask mercy of God? Yes: Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, Matt. vii. 7.

3. Are we to pray to God for things agreeable to his will? Yes: If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us, 1 John v. 14. Must we pray for pardoning mercy, and sanctifying grace? Yes: Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 16. Are God's promises to be the guide of our desires in prayer? Yes: Remember thy word unto thy servant, Ps. cxix. 49. And the ground of our faith? Yes: For I hope in thy word, v. 81.

4. Must we pray in the name of Christ? Yes: Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, John xiv. 13. Relying on his righteousness alone? Yes: For we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 19. Must we pray in faith? Yes: Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, Jam. i. 6. Depending on the assistance of the Holy Spirit? Yes: for the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, Rom. viii. 26.

5. Must we in prayer make confession of sin? Yes: I prayed to the Lord my God, and made my confession, Dan. ix. 4. And must we give thanks for mercies received? Yes: Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, Ps. c. 4.

6. Must we be constant in prayer? Yes: I give myself unto prayer, Ps. cix. 4. And humble in prayer? Yes: for we are but dust and ashes, Gen. xviii. 27. And earnest in prayer? Yes: Always labouring fervently in prayer, Col. iv. 12. Must we in sincerity set God before us in prayer? Yes: Let us draw near with a true heart, Heb. x. 22. Must we pray in charity? Yes: Lifting up pure hands without wrath, 1 Tim. ii. 8.

7. Will God hear and accept those who thus pray to him? Yes: He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain, Isa. xlv. 19. But will the love of sin spoil the success of prayer? Yes: If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me, Ps. lxvi. 18.

Q. 99. *What rule hath God given for our direction in prayer?*

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called, The Lord's Prayer.

1. Do we need direction in prayer? Yes: For we know not what we should pray for as we ought, Rom. viii. 26. Should we pray to God for direction? Yes: Lord, teach us to pray, Luke xi. 1. Hath he given us direction in prayer? Yes: Take with you words, and turn to the Lord, Hos. xiv. 2.

2. Is the whole word of God of use to direct us? Yes: I will show thee that which is noted in the Scripture of truth, Dan. x. 21. compare Chron. ix. 23. Is the Lord's prayer to be used as a directory for prayer? Yes: After this manner therefore pray ye, Matt. vi. 9. And is it to be used as a form of prayer? Yes: When ye pray, say, Our Father, Luke xi. 2.

Q. 100. *What does the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?*

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer, which is, *Our Father which art in heaven*, teaches us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a Father able and ready to help us, and that we should pray with and for others.

1. Is God our Father? Yes: Doubtless thou art our Father, Isa. lxiii. 16. Does he appoint us to call him so? Yes: Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth, Jer. iii. 4. Is he our Father by creation? Yes: Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us? Mal. ii. 10. And by redemption? Yes: Is not he thy Father that bought thee? Deut. xxxii. 6. And by adoption? Yes: I will be a Father to them, 2 Cor. vi. 18.

2. Is God a wise Father? Yes: the Father of lights, Jam. i. 17. Is he a gracious Father? Yes: the Father of mercies, 2 Cor. i. 3. Is he our soul's Father? Yes: the Father of spirits, Heb. xii. 9. Is he the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Yes: I bow my knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 14. Is he in him our Father? Yes: I ascend to my Father, and your Father, John xx. 17.

3. Are we in prayer to call God Father? Yes: crying, Abba, Father, Gal. iv. 6. And to esteem him as a Father? Yes: I will arise and go to my Father, and say unto him, Father, Luke xv. 18. And is this comfortable in prayer? Yes: For with thee the fatherless findeth mercy, Hos. xiv. 3.

4. Is God our Father in heaven? Yes: For the Lord's throne is in heaven, Ps. xi. 4. Is heaven a high place? Yes: and we must lift up our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens, Lam. iii. 41. Is it a holy place? Yes: and we must lift up holy hands, 1 Tim. ii. 8. Is it a place of prospect? Yes: and therefore our Father sees in secret, Matt. vi. 6. Is it a place of power? Yes: and therefore he is able to do above all that we ask or think, Eph. iii. 20.

5. Ought we therefore to pray with reverence? Yes: for God is in heaven, and we upon earth, Eccl. v. 2. And with holy confidence? Yes: for we have boldness and access with confidence, Eph. iii. 12. For is God a Father who is able to help us? Yes: My Father is greater than all, John x. 29. Does he know our wants? Yes: Your heavenly Father knows that ye have need of all these things, Matt. vi. 32. Is he willing to help? Yes: For the Father himself loveth you, John xvi. 27.

6. Must we pray with others? Yes: There were

many gathered together praying, Acts xii. 12. Must we pray for others? Yes: we must make supplication for all saints, Eph. vi. 18.

Q. 101. *What do we pray for in the first petition?*

A. In the first petition, which is, *Hallowed be thy Name*, we pray, that God would enable us, and others, to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known, and that he would dispose all things to his own glory.

1. Ought we to desire the glory of God in the first place? Yes: that God in all things may be glorified, 1 Pet. iv. 11. Is God glorified when his name is glorified? Yes: They shall worship before thee, O Lord, and shalt glorify thy name, Ps. lxxxvi. 9. Is God's name glorified when it is sanctified or hallowed? Yes: for he is glorious in holiness, Exod. xv. 11. Ought we therefore to sanctify it? Yes: Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, 1 Pet. iii. 15.

2. Are we to pray that we ourselves may be enabled to glorify God? Yes: Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise, Ps. li. 15. And that we may live for that end? Yes: Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, Ps. cxix. 175. And be delivered for that end? Yes: Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name, Ps. cxlii. 7. And are we to pray that others also may be enabled to glorify him? Yes: that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven, Matt. v. 16.

3. Do we here pray for the propagating of the knowledge of God? Yes: That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations, Ps. lxvii. 2. And for the conversion of souls to him? Yes: Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee, Ps. lxvii. 3. And for the success of the gospel? Yes: that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, 2 Thess. iii. 1. Do we pray for the fruitfulness of Christians? Yes: that they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God, Phil. i. 11. And for the flourishing of the churches of Christ? Yes: that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified, Isa. lxi. 3.

4. Do we pray that God would glorify himself? Yes: Father, glorify thy name, John xii. 28. And are we sure he will do it? Yes: for there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again, John xii. 28. Do we pray that he would exalt his own name? Yes: Be thou exalted, O Lord, in thine own strength, Ps. xxi. 13. And are we sure he will do it? Yes: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth, Ps. xlvi. 10. May we plead this with him? Yes: What wilt thou do to thy great name? Josh. vii. 9.

5. Do we pray that God would bring glory to himself out of all events? Yes: To thy name give glory, Ps. cxv. 1. Even out of those events that seem contrary? Yes: that the wrath of man may praise him, Ps. lxxvi. 10. Must we desire it concerning ourselves? Yes: that we may be unto him for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory, Jer. xiii. 11. And concerning all our affairs? Yes: That Christ may be magnified in my body both by life and death, Phil. i. 20.

Q. 102. *What do we pray for in the second petition?*

A. In the second petition, which is, *Thy kingdom come*, we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

1. Must we acknowledge our heavenly Father's kingdom? Yes: The Lord is king for ever and ever, Ps. x. 16. And must we admire it? Yes: we must speak of the glory of his kingdom, Ps. cxlv. 11. Must we own him to be our King? Yes: Thou art my king, O God, Ps. xliv. 4. Must we heartily wish well to his kingdom? Yes: Seek ye first the kingdom of God, Matt. vi. 33.

2. Has Satan a kingdom in opposition to God's kingdom? Yes: for he is the prince of this world, John xii. 31. Does he rule where sin rules? Yes: for he works in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. Must we pray that that kingdom may be destroyed? Yes: The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee, Zech. iii. 2. Must we pray that the dominion of sin may be broken? Yes: O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, Ps. vii. 9. And that the power of the church's enemies may be crushed? Yes: So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord, Judg. v. 31. And their policies blasted? Yes: Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness, 2 Sam. xv. 31. And their projects defeated? Yes: O my God, make them like a wheel, Ps. lxxxiii. 13.

3. Have we reason to hope that Satan's kingdom shall be destroyed in the hearts of believers? Yes: For the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly, Rom. xvi. 20. And that it shall be destroyed in the world? Yes: For I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven, Luke x. 18. So destroyed that it shall not destroy the church? Yes: for the church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Matt. xvi. 18.

4. Is the kingdom of Christ our Father's kingdom? Yes: I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion, Ps. ii. 6. Must we pray that that may be advanced? Yes: Prayer shall be made for him continually, Ps. lxxii. 15. That we and others may be brought into it? Yes: That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith, Eph. iii. 17. And kept in it? Yes: That we may be preserved blameless to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Thess. v. 23.

5. Are we to pray for converting grace? Yes: Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, Jer. xxxi. 18. And that others may partake of that grace? Yes: That sinners may be converted unto thee, Ps. li. 13. Are we to pray for confirming grace? Yes: That God would comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work, 2 Thess. ii. 17. Are we to pray for the strengthening of faith? Yes: Lord, increase our faith, Luke xvii. 5. And the increase of love? Yes: This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, Phil. i. 9.

6. Are we to pray for the advancement of the kingdom of light? Yes: O send out thy light and thy truth, Ps. xliii. 3. And the kingdom of holiness? Yes: The God of peace sanctify you wholly, 1 Thess. v. 23. And the kingdom of love? Yes: That they all may be one, John xvii. 21. Must we pray for the sending forth of ministers in order hereunto? Yes: Pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth labourers into his harvest, Matt. ix. 38. And for the presence of God with them? Yes: that utterance may be given to them, Eph. vi. 19.

7. Are we to pray for the prosperity of the church? Yes: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, Ps. cxxii. 6. And for the welfare of all who belong to it? Yes: Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee, Ps. lxx. 4. And for the comfort of all good Christians? Yes: Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, Eph. vi. 24. Must we pray for the enlargement of the church? Yes: My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved, Rom. x. 1. And for the reformation of it? Yes: Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts, Ps. lxxx. 19. And for the defence of it? Yes: Build thou the walls of Jerusalem, Ps. li. 18. And for the deliverance of it? Yes: Command deliverances for Jacob, Ps. xliv. 4.

8. May we pray in faith for the advancement and continuance of Christ's kingdom? Yes: For of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, Isa. ix. 7. And have we reason to triumph in this? Yes: Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, Rev. xix. 6.

9. Is the kingdom of glory yet to come? Yes: When the mystery of God shall be finished, Rev. x. 7. Are we to pray that that may be hastened? Yes: Looking for, and hastening unto, the coming of the day of God, 2 Pet. iii. 12. Are we to desire our own removal to that glory at death? Yes: Desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven, 2 Cor. v. 2. Are we to pray that we may be ready for it? Yes: Watch therefore, and pray always, Luke xxi. 36. And then that it may be hastened? Yes: Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, Luke ii. 29. Are we to pray for Christ's second coming at the end of time? Yes: Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus, Rev. xxii. 20.

Q. 103. *What do we pray for in the third petition?*

A. In the third petition, which is, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*, we pray that God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

1. Is the will of God's commands the rule of our action? Yes: we must understand what the will of the Lord is, Eph. v. 17. Are we to pray that we may conform to this rule? Yes: that we may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, Rom. xii. 2. Must we pray that God would give us to know his will? Yes: Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law, Ps. cxix. 34. And to know it fully? Yes: That ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will, Col. i. 9. And to know it in doubtful cases? Yes: Teach me thy way, O Lord, lead me in a plain path, Ps. xxvii. 11. Do all who are sanctified truly desire to know God's will? Yes: What saith my Lord unto his servant? Josh. v. 14.

2. When we know God's will, are we able of ourselves to do it? No: we are not sufficient of ourselves, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Must we therefore pray to God to make us able? Yes: Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands, Neh. vi. 9. And must we depend upon his grace? Yes: I will go in the strength of the Lord God, Ps. lxxi. 16. Must we pray to God to make us willing? Yes: Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, Ps. cxix. 36. And to make us entirely willing? Yes: Unite my heart to fear thy name, Ps. lxxxvi. 11.

3. Must we pray that we may be sincere in our obedience? Yes: Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, Ps. cxix. 80. And that we may be exact in our obedience? Yes: O that my ways were directed to keep thy commandments! Ps. cxix. 5. And that we may be universal in our obedience? Yes: That we may stand complete in all the will of God, Col. iv. 12. And that we may be armed against that which would divert us from our obedience? Yes: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way, Ps. cxix. 37. And must we pray that others also may do God's will? Yes: That they may be perfect in every good work, to do his will, Heb. xiii. 21.

4. Is the will of God's counsel the rule of his actions? Yes: for he worketh all according to the counsel of his own will, Eph. i. 11. Must we desire that this may be done? Yes: The will of the Lord be done, Acts xxi. 14. Rather than our own will? Yes: Not as I will, but as thou wilt, Matt. xxvi. 39. And must we acquiesce in it? Yes: It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. iii. 18. And must we pray that he will enable us to do so? Yes: That we may be strengthened with all might,

unto all patience and long-suffering, with joyfulness, Col. i. 11.

Do the angels in heaven do the will of God? Yes: they do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word, Ps. ciii. 20. Do they do it readily? Yes: they fly swiftly, Dan. ix. 21. Do they do it zealously? Yes: for they are a flaming fire, Ps. civ. 4. Do they do it with an eye to God? Yes: for they always behold the face of our Father, Matt. xviii. 10. And are we to pray that God's will may so be done on earth? Yes: that the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, Rev. xi. 15.

Q. 104. *What do we pray for in the fourth petition?*

A. In the fourth petition, which is, *Give us this day our daily bread*, we pray, that of God's free gift we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

1. Are we to pray for the good things of this life? Yes: for the Lord is for the body, 1 Cor. vi. 13. Must we go to God for them? Yes: for he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things, Acts xvii. 25. Must we go to him for the comfort of them? Yes: for he gives us richly all things to enjoy, 1 Tim. vi. 17. Do we deserve the good things of this life? No: we are less than the least of all God's mercies, Gen. xxxii. 10. Must we therefore beg them of God as a free gift? Yes: God gives thee the dew of heaven, Gen. xxvii. 28.

2. Are we to pray for riches? No: lest we be full, and say, Who is the Lord? Prov. xxx. 9. Are we to pray for dainties? No: Be not desirous of dainties, for they are deceitful meat, Prov. xxiii. 3. Are we to be content with such a competent portion of these things as God sees fit for us? Yes: having food and raiment, let us be therewith content, 1 Tim. vi. 8. Are we to pray for that? Yes: Feed me with food convenient for me, Prov. xxx. 8. And need we desire any more? No: If God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come to my heavenly Father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, Gen. xxviii. 20, 21.

3. Are we to pray each day for the bread of the day? Yes: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself, Matt. vi. 34. And must we pray for our bread honestly gotten? Yes: for with quietness we must work, and eat our own bread, 2 Thess. iii. 12. And have we encouragement to pray for this? Yes: for godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, 1 Tim. iv. 8.

4. Do we herein pray for health? Yes: for God is our life, and the length of our days, Deut. xxx. 20. And for success in our callings? Yes: Establish thou the work of our hands upon us, Ps. xc. 17. And for sleep? Yes: for so he giveth his beloved sleep, Ps. cxxvii. 2. And for seasonable weather? Yes: Ask ye of the Lord rain, Zech. x. 1.

5. Must we pray for God's blessing on what we have? Yes: for man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, Matt. iv. 4. And is it then comfortable to us? Yes: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer, 1 Tim. iv. 5. Must we pray most earnestly for bread for our souls? Yes: Lord, evermore give us that bread, John vi. 34. Are we to pray for others' prosperity, as well as for our own? Yes: I wish that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth, 3 John 2. And for the supply of the poor and needy? Yes: that he will abundantly bless our provision, and satisfy our poor with bread, Ps. cxxxii. 15.

Q. 105. *What do we pray for in the fifth petition?*

A. In the fifth petition, which is, *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*, we pray, that God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

1. Are our sins our debts to God? Yes: There was a certain creditor that had two debtors, &c. Luke vii. 41. Are they great debts? Yes: ten thousand talents, Matt. xviii. 24. Can we discharge these debts ourselves? No: we have nothing to pay, Luke vii. 42. Are we liable to the prison of hell then? Yes: not to depart thence till we have payed the last mite, Luke xii. 58, 59. Is it possible to obtain the forgiveness of this debt? Yes: There is forgiveness with thee, Ps. cxxx. 4.

2. Are we to pray for the forgiveness of these debts? Yes: Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, Ps. cxliii. 2. And to pray earnestly for it? Yes: For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, Ps. xxv. 11. Must we plead God's mercies? Yes: According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions, Ps. li. 1. And Christ's merits? Yes: Through the redemption that is in Jesus, Rom. iii. 24. Must we pray for it every day? Yes: when we pray, Give us our daily bread, we must pray, Forgive us our debts.

3. Must we pray that God would ease us of the burthen of sin? Yes: Take away all iniquity, Hos. xiv. 2. And that he would cleanse us from the filth of sin? Yes: Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, Ps. li. 2. And cure us of the wounds of sin? Yes: Heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee, Ps. xli. 4. And save us from the punishment of sin? Yes: I will say unto God, do not condemn me, Job x. 2.

4. Must we pray to God to give us that grace which will qualify us for pardon? Yes: for Christ is ex-

alted to give repentance and remission, Acts v. 31. And that he would give us the comfort of our pardon: Yes: Make me to hear joy and gladness, Ps. li. 8. And must we, in order hereunto, be particular in confessing sin? Yes: Declare, that thou mayest be justified, Isa. xliii. 26.

5. Must we forgive those who have provoked us? Yes: forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, Col. iii. 13. Must we bear them no malice? No: Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned, Jam. v. 9. Must we be ready to be reconciled to them? Yes: When ye stand praying, forgive if ye have ought against any, Mark xi. 25. Should we be merciful to those that we have advantage against? Yes: Thou shouldst have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, as I had pity on thee, Matt. xviii. 33. Is this required to qualify us for the pardon of sin? Yes: If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, Matt. vi. 14. Will God forgive those that do not forgive? No: If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours, *v.* 15.

Q. 106. *What do we pray for in the sixth petition?*

A. In the sixth petition, which is, *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*, we pray, that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

1. Must we pray that we may not be tempted? Yes: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, Matt. xxvi. 41. And that temptations may be removed? Yes: I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me, 2 Cor. xii. 8. And that we may not be overcome by them? Yes: Let no iniquity have dominion over me, Ps. cxix. 133.

2. Must we pray that God would not leave us to ourselves? Yes: Incline not my heart to any evil thing, Ps. cxli. 4. And that he would not withdraw the assistance of his grace? Yes: Take not thy Holy Spirit away from me, Ps. li. 11. But that he would strengthen us against every temptation? Yes: Uphold me with thy free spirit, Ps. li. 12. And that he would preserve us through it? Yes: That our faith fail not, Luke xxii. 32. Have we encouragement to pray against temptation? Yes: For God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, 1 Cor. x. 13. And is prayer a part of our spiritual armour? Yes: Praying always, Eph. vi. 13, 18.

3. Must we dread sin as the worst evil? Yes: That I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, Neh. vi. 13. And must we pray to be kept from it? Yes: to be delivered from every evil work, 2 Tim. iv. 18. And from all occasions of it? Yes: Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, Ps. cxix. 37.

4. Must we pray against pride? Yes: That he may hide pride from man, Job xxxiii. 17. And against lying? Yes: Remove from me the way of lying, Ps. cxix. 29. And against sensuality? Yes: Let me not eat of their dainties, Ps. cxli. 4. And against uncleanness? Yes: Create in me a clean heart, O God, Ps. li. 10. And against covetousness? Yes: Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness, Ps. cxix. 36. And against all tongue-sins? Yes: Set a watch, O Lord, before the door of my mouth, keep the door of my lips, Ps. cxli. 3. Must we pray especially against wilful sin? Yes: Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins, Ps. xix. 13. Must we pray that others also may be kept from sin? Yes: I pray to God that ye do no evil, 2 Cor. xiii. 7.

5. Must we pray to be delivered from other evil? Yes: Keep me from evil that it may not grieve me, 1 Chron. iv. 10. Must our eye be to God for our preservation? Yes: Hide me under the shadow of thy wings, Ps. xvii. 8. May we take encouragement in this prayer from God's power? Yes: for he is able to keep that which we have committed to him, 2 Tim. i. 12. And from his promise? Yes: There shall no evil befall thee, Ps. xci. 10. And from our own experience? Yes: He that has delivered, does deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver, 2 Cor. i. 10.

Q. 107. *What does the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, which is, *For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen*, teaches us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen*.

1. Are we in prayer to plead with God? Yes: I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments, Job xxiii. 4. Are our pleadings to move God? No: For he is in one mind, and who can turn him, Job xxiii. 13. Are they to move ourselves? Yes: that we may stir up ourselves to take hold on God, Isa. lxiv. 7.

2. Can we in prayer plead any merit of our own? No: We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, Dan. ix. 18. Must we therefore take our encouragement from God only? Yes: Defer not for thine own sake, O my God, *v.* 19. And must we depend on that encouragement? Yes: Now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee, Ps. xxxix. 7.

3. May we plead that his is the kingdom? Yes: Art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? 2 Chron. xx. 6. And that his is the power? Yes: There is nothing too hard for thee, Jer. xxxii. 17. And that his is the glory? Yes: Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name, Ps. lxxix. 9.

4. May we also plead his mercy? Yes: Save me for thy mercy's sake, Ps. vi. 4. And his promise? Yes: Remember thy word unto thy servant, Ps. cxix. 49. And our own experience of his goodness? Yes: Thou hast delivered my soul from death, wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling? Ps. lvi. 13. But must we especially plead the mediation of his Son? Yes: Look upon the face of thine Anointed, Ps. lxxxiv. 9. And may we hope to prevail in these pleadings? Yes: for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, Jam. v. 16. Is it God's grace in us which alone qualifies us for his favour? Yes: Thou wilt prepare their heart, and then thou wilt cause thine ear to hear, Ps. x. 17.

5. Are we in prayer to praise God? Yes: Every day will I bless thee, Ps. cxlv. 2. Are we to ascribe kingdom, power, and glory to him? Yes: Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, Rev. v. 13. Must we acknowledge them to be his? Yes: Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Must we acknowledge them to be his for ever? Yes: Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, Ps. cxlv. 13. And must we desire to be for ever praising him? Yes: I will sing praise to my God, while I have my being, Ps. civ. 33. Is the work of praise good work? Yes: it is pleasant, and praise is comely, Ps. cxlvii. 1.

6. Does Amen signify our desire to be heard? Yes: So be it, O Lord, Jer. xi. 5. And our hope that we shall be heard? Yes: we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him, 1 John v. 15. Is it therefore proper to conclude our prayers and praises with Amen? Yes: Let all the people say, Amen. Hallelujah, Ps. cvi. 48.

# CHRIST'S FAVOUR TO LITTLE CHILDREN DISPLAYED,

IN

# A SERMON,

PREACHED THE 6TH OF MARCH, 1713.

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MARK X. 16.

*And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*

APPLICATION was made to our Lord Jesus, when he was here upon earth, on a great variety of occasions: some we find imploring his favour upon one account, and some upon another; some for themselves, and some for their relations; some for the body, and some for the soul: thus was fulfilled the prediction of the dying patriarch concerning Shiloh, that *to him shall the gathering of the people be.*[a] And be it observed, for the encouragement of all who humbly, and in faith, apply themselves to him,—of the *multitudes* that spread their complaints before him, he never sent *any* away from him, ashamed of their hope in him: he gave them all an answer of peace; and they had what they came for.

But here in this paragraph, of which my text is the close, we have application made to Christ, upon an errand different from any other, but such a one as those who knew the heart of a parent, of a Christian parent, will be glad to be encouraged and directed to come to him upon, and will therefore bless God that it is here upon record. There were those who brought *young children to him, that he should touch them, v.* 13. In St. Matthew's gospel it is said, *they desired that he would put his hands upon them, and pray.*[b]

Who they were that brought these children, we are not told; whether their parents, or no; it is most likely they were, for who should show so much concern for them as they? Nor are we told what number of children were brought; nor whether they were all of one family; nor just *of what age* they were, but as to that, St. Luke tells us they were τα βρεφη,[c] it is the word which in the story of Christ's birth we translate the *babe*, in swaddling clothes, and in the manger;[d] and it is put for *new-born babes*, that desire the breast.[e] The critics say it signifies a *child at nurse.*[*] They are said to be brought to Christ, which intimates, that they could not go themselves; and it is plain that they were very little, for he took them up in his arms; so little, that he could easily hold them in one arm, for so he did when he put his hands upon them to bless them.

Christ came to teach, and heal, and bless; to teach a world that sat in darkness, to heal a world that was sick and dying, and to bless a world that lay under the curse.

Now, 1. These children were not brought to Christ to be *taught*, for they were not yet capable of receiving instruction; nor could they profit by his preaching, or put any questions to him. Those who are grown up to years of understanding, have need to be busy in *getting knowledge now*, that they may redeem the time they lost, through the invincible incapacities of their infancy.

Nor, 2. Were they brought to Christ to be *cured*, for it does not appear that they needed it. Little children are indeed liable to many distempers, painful, mortal ones. The physicians have a book among them, *De Morbis Infantum—on the diseases of infants.* Death and its harbingers reign even over them who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,[f] but these children were strong and healthful, and we do not find that any thing ailed them.

But, 3. They were brought to Christ to be *blessed;* so they meant when they desired that he would touch them: the sign is put for the thing signified. The laying on of hands was a ceremony anciently used in blessing. When Joseph brought his two sons to Israel, and put one to his left hand, and the other

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a Gen. xlix. 10. b Matt. xix. 13. c Luke xviii. 15. d Luke ii. 12.

e 1 Pet. ii. 2. f Rom. v. 14.

* See Dr. Whitby.

to his right, that he might *touch* them, that which he desired was, that he would *bless* them:[g] so these brought their children to Christ, not that he might touch and *heal* them, but that he might touch and *bless* them, with the saving strength of his right hand.

They looked upon Christ as a prophet, as a great prophet, as *that Prophet which should come into the world*, as one who had a great interest in heaven, and consequently a great influence upon this earth. Now, if he be *a Prophet* he shall *pray for thee*;[h] but then thou must pay him so much respect as to desire his prayers. This honour they here give to Christ, (as it is fit those should do, who expect to receive favour from him,) in their humble request that he would lift up a prayer for their children; which they believe will avail much, as the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man.[i]

It is good to have an interest in the prayers of those who are of the spiritual seed of Jacob, who seek God, and know how to wrestle with him. And to improve that interest for ourselves and our children, we should not only pray with, and for, our families ourselves, but engage the prayers of our friends for them, that we may hereby not only put an honour upon prayer, but put an honour upon our brethren; and upon the communion of saints, not only the communion of churches, but the communion of religious families, who all meet in him, in whom all the families, all the praying families, of the earth are blessed.[k] A treasury of prayers laid up for our children, may stand them in better stead than thousands of gold and silver laid up for them. But if we desire this kindness of our friends, and brethren, and ministers, we must remember that one good turn requires another, and must, therefore, make conscience of praying for them and their families, as for ourselves and for our own. St. Paul, who prays so earnestly for his friends, does as earnestly desire their prayers for him.[l] *The Lord give mercy to the households*[m] of our acquaintance, is a petition which (or something like it) should have a place in our daily prayers.

Now the text tells us how they succeeded who brought their little children to Christ, to be blessed and prayed for; how well they succeeded.

And it is recorded by *three* of the evangelists; because it was a manifest indication of the design of Christ, to continue to the children of believers under the New-Testament dispensation, the same covenant right, and visible church membership, that they had under the Old-Testament dispensation, by virtue of God's promise to Abraham and his seed, that blessing of Abraham, which comes upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;[n] and because it gives us great encouragement, when we come to Christ ourselves, to bring our children with us, and present them also to him.

They who brought these infants to Christ, were frowned upon and discountenanced by the disciples; they rebuked them, because they would not have such a needless trouble (so they thought it) given to their Master, who had other work enough upon his hands. If this be encouraged, they shall see no end of it. Was it not enough that he cured the sick, which none but he could do, but he must bless the healthy too, which others might do? How well is it for us, that our Master has more tenderness and compassion than the best of his ministers have; and is touched more nearly than they are, or can be, with the feeling of our infirmities,[o] and an inclination to gratify those innocent desires of humble and believing supplicants, which those who think themselves polite and refined, look upon with a slight, as not worth taking notice of. In grace and goodness he is God and not man;[p] nay, he is both God and man: as man, he has himself suffered, being tempted, and is therefore able with the greater sympathy, to succour them who are tempted;[q] and as God, in doing good his thoughts and ways are infinitely above ours, the best of ours, above those of the best of us.[r]

As, when God promised to show Moses his *glory*, he proclaimed all his *goodness*, and caused that to pass before him;[s] so our Lord Jesus, when he would let his chosen ones *see his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*, he showed himself upon all occasions *full of grace*.[t] Among men it is looked upon to be the symptom of a sweet and loving disposition, to take notice of little children, and to be familiar with them.[u] By this, among many other instances, our Lord Jesus showed himself to be kind and benign, meek and lowly in heart; that, upon all occasions, he discovered a particular kindness for little children, and never more than upon this occasion, when he gave a severe reprimand to his disciples for prohibiting those who brought their children to him; he was ηγανακτησε—*much displeased at it*; he was both *sorry* and *angry* that his own disciples did not better know his mind, and that they should be adversaries to those for whom they ought to have been advocates: and he gave orders immediately that *they* should be called to him *who brought the children*, (who, perhaps, upon the disciples' check, were going off,) and that room should be made for them to come to him: by all means *suffer the little children to come to me*, and *do not forbid them*; for they belong to the church *still, as much as ever*; the *kingdom of God* which I come to set up includes them. They are within the allegiance of Messiah the Prince, and he will own them as his subjects.

And not only for the satisfaction of those who

g Gen. xlviii. 13. h Gen. xx. 7. i Jam. v. 16. k Gen. xii. 3. l Rom. xv. 30 m 2 Tim. i. 16. n Gal. iii. 14.

o Heb. iv. 15. p Hos. xi. 9. q Heb. ii. 18. r Isa. lv. 9. s Exod. xxxiii. 18, 19. t John i. 14. u 1 Pet. ii. 3.

brought them, and to please them, but for the benefit and advantage of the children, he took them up, with a great deal of endearing tenderness, in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them; did not only *pray* for a blessing, as they desired, but *commanded the blessing*, as one having authority, even *life for evermore*,[v] which is inclusive of all blessings.

But what encouragement (you will say) does this give to us? Christ is not now among us as he was then; and we cannot either make such addresses to him, or receive such favours from him, as they then might. It is true we cannot in such a sensible manner, but we may as really in a spiritual way, make our applications to him, and expect communications from him; for in him all fulness dwells, to him all judgment is committed, and the knee of every supplicant must bow to him: and we are sure he has blessings as much at command now as ever he had. And, therefore, from the kind entertainment he gave to these children who were *brought* to him, we are warranted to infer his readiness to receive our children that are *offered up to him*, for it is certain never any one was the worse for going to heaven.

From hence observe then, That our Lord Jesus has given us great encouragement to hope, that he will favourably accept our little children, when, in a right manner, we bring them to him for a blessing.

I shall endeavour to show, I. How we must now bring our little children to Christ. II. What entertainment we may promise ourselves they shall find with him, according to this instance in the text. And then, III. Make application.

Those who are truly ambitious of this honour for their children, and covetous of this wealth for them, to have them blessed of Christ, cannot but wish to know how they may bring their children to him, so that they may hope to obtain his favour. *Say not in thine heart, "Who shall ascend into heaven,*[w] where Christ sits at God's right hand, and take my children with him thither to receive his blessing?" No: *the word* of God is nigh to thee; and Christ in the word, and his blessings, to be received by faith, applying the word to ourselves. The tabernacle of God is among us; the priests, the spiritual sacrifices, the Israel of God,—where two or three of them are gathered in his name, he will be in the midst of them,[x] both to receive their homage, and to give out his favours. Where his ordinances are administered according to his institution, and those things which he has commanded, observed and taught, there will he be all the days, even *to the end of the world*;[y] there he records his name, and there will meet his people, and *bless them*; nay, wherever a true Christian is, there is a living temple, in which God is served and honoured, and his blessings and favours communicated, by his Spirit dwelling in the heart. There is still a way of access to Christ, a new and living way, by which we may not only come to Christ ourselves, but bring others to him, bring ours to him, our children, who are pieces of ourselves.

Four ways we must bring our children to Christ:

1. By surrendering them to him. When by a deliberate and solemn act of our souls, we resign and give up, with ourselves, the children also which God has graciously given us, to the Lord Jesus, to be to him for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory;[z] to be Christians, devoted to his honour, and employed in his service; to be members of that body whereof he is the head, servants in that family whereof he is the Master, and subjects in that kingdom of his among men, which is incorporated by that great gospel charter, *Disciple all nations into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*;[a] then we may bring our children to Christ: we present them to him,[b] (a poor present to him who has a world of angels at command, yet such as he requires and will accept of,) as living sacrifices, which we desire may be holy and acceptable; it is our reasonable service.

Parents are invested by nature in a right to their children, and an authority over them for their good. A daughter in her father's house was accounted by the law not *sui juris—her own right*; he could disannul her vows.[c] Now this right in our children we must not only acknowledge to be subordinate to that prior superior title God has to them; for we are only the fathers of their flesh, he is the Father of their spirits;[d] but we must also transfer to our Lord Jesus, whom the Father has constituted the great trustee, both of all the powers with which he intended mankind should be ruled, and of all the *favours* with which he intended mankind should be blessed.

Our children are God's children; (they are *my sons* and *my daughters*, saith God, *which thou hast borne unto me*;[e]) and therefore it is sacrilege to alienate them from him, and to devote them to the service of the world and the flesh; it is profaning the holy things of the Lord our God. And it is our duty to dedicate them and dispose of them as he directs. Now he directs us to give them up to Christ; to enrol them among his disciples; to enter their names among his servants,[f] who being born in his house, belong to his family, and are entitled to the protection and provisions of it, and taken under the order and discipline of it.

That is a great word, and speaks much of the dignity and power of our Lord Jesus; *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands.*[g] All the things that concern his honour and government, all his part of the matters in variance between himself and fallen man, he has put into the hands of the Mediator, as referee of the controversy, the

[v] Ps. cxxxiii. 3. [w] Rom. x. 6, 8. [x] Matt. xviii. 20.
[y] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. [z] Jer. xiii. 11. [a] Matt xxviii. 19.
[b] Rom. xii. 1. [c] Numb. xxx. 5. [d] Heb. xii. 9.
[e] Ezek. xvi. 20. [f] Ps. cxvi. 16. [g] John iii. 35.

blessed Day's-man, who has laid his hand upon us both. Now that which he requires of us (and with good reason) is, that we love the Son, and give all things into his hand; all our interests and concerns; and particularly our children, who were made and born for immortality, who are entered into a state of probation and preparation for eternity, whom therefore we commit to him as to their Guardian: by whose gospel, life and immortality are brought to light,[h] and brought to hand.

Hereby we do honour to the exalted Redeemer, and recognize his authority; as one to whom the Father has therefore given power over all flesh, especially over the spirits of all flesh, that he should *give eternal life to as many as he had given him*,[i] as many of them. We own his dominion both in heaven and on earth, by owning his indisputable title to our children; both to their bodies, by which they are allied to the earth, and to their souls, by which they are allied to heaven and the world of spirits.

Hereby we confess, that as we ourselves, so our children, are more his than our own; and therefore we desire that both we and ours may live to him. And in thus honouring the Son we honour the Father also; for Christ came to bring us to himself, that he might bring us to God.[k] Our children are therefore brought to Christ, the Mediator of the covenant, that through him they may be brought to God, as their God in covenant. When Israel was taken into covenant with God, express notice is taken not only of their captains, and elders, and officers, but of their little ones, as parties to the covenant which the Lord their God made with them.[l]

Hereby we do *well* for our children, the *best* we can do for them, for we give them up to him who is able to do that for them which we cannot do, and which must be done for them, or they are undone. We know they derive through our loins sinful and corrupt natures; we know they are shapen in iniquity, they are called, and not miscalled, *transgressors from the womb*:[m] what therefore can we do for them, but bring them to him who came to save sinners, to save them from their sins? They are born polluted; and by presenting them to Christ, we bring them to the fountain that was opened for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in from sin, which is uncleanness.[n] They are born distempered; and we thus bring them to the great Physician, to have their temperament corrected, to have their very constitution altered; to have not the mass of their blood, but of their minds, changed for the better, that *as they have borne the image of the earthly, they may also bear the image of the heavenly*.[o]

Now this solemn surrender of our children to God as theirs in covenant, if we ourselves be in covenant with God, I think ought to be done by the ordinance of baptism; an ordinance peculiar to the Redeemer's kingdom, and a seal, as circumcision was, of the righteousness which is by faith,[p] and therefore, like it, belonging both to believers and to their infant seed. Our Saviour, when he instituted that ordinance, gave a double intimation concerning his gospel kingdom which was then to be set up. One was, that it must not be *confined to the Jews*, but *spread to the Gentiles*; therefore go and *make all nations disciples*. The other was, that it should not be *confined to that generation*, and live and die with the apostles. It must not be (as the historian says of the Roman commonwealth) *Res unius ætatis—a thing confined to one age*; no, it must continue, for Christ *will* continue at the head of it, and in the midst of it, always, even to the end of the world. Now, as baptism did subserve the former design, and attended the progress of the gospel to the most distant regions of the earth; so we have reason to think it was instituted equally to subserve the latter design, and to attend the propagating of the gospel to the latest ages of time; that by taking early hold of the seed of the faithful, and giving their parents, and ministers, and consciences, early hold of them, provision might be made (as was by the altar, *Erd.*) that nothing might make them cease from fearing the Lord:[q] that thus a seed might serve the Lord Jesus, which should be accounted to him for a generation.[r] And by keeping up the entail, and as it were by a continual claim, the name of Christ might endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.[s]

But waving this dispute; I insist upon that, in which I am sure we are all agreed, that our children are to be given up to the Lord Jesus; (and *of his own* do we give him, for he has *bought them with a price*;[t]) that they may glorify him in body and spirit, and he may be honoured even by *their* hosannas. We lend them to the Lord, as Hannah did Samuel,[u] that they may be his all the days of their life; and if they be so, they shall be his to the endless ages of eternity.

2. We must bring them to Christ, by seeking to him *for* them, as those who are surrendered to him. They are to be but once baptized, but they are to be daily prayed for, and the promise sealed to them in their baptism put in suit and pleaded with God in their behalf. These brought their children to Christ, when they begged his blessing on them, and thus we must bring ours to him; bring their case to him, the case of their souls, their precious souls, which ought to be laid nearer our hearts than any thing else that concerns them.

h 2 Tim. i. 10. i John xvii. 2. k 1 Pet. iii. 18.
l Deut. xxix. 10—12. m Isa. xlviii. 8.
n Zech. xiii. 1. o 1 Cor. xv. 49.
p Rom. iv. 11. q Josh. xxii. 25, 34. r Ps. xxii. 29, 30.
s Ps. lxxxix. 28. t 1 Cor. vi. 20.
u 1 Sam. i. 28.

When Christ was here upon earth, we read of many who applied themselves to him for mercy for their children: *Lord, have mercy upon my son,*[v] saith one; *Lord, have mercy upon my daughter,*[w] saith another: and the children fared the better for the faith and prayers of the parents. And we may, as easily, come to him now he is in heaven, and more easily; and with the same petition: Lord, have mercy on my son, on my daughter, who is foolish, and vain, and carnally minded, (which is death,[x]) and much under the power of Satan. Even our little children's souls are to be prayed for; for we believe they are born in sin, and foolishness is bound in their hearts; and we see how soon corrupt nature appears and works in them, and how the tares spring up with the wheat: let us therefore be earnest with God for the operation of his grace upon their hearts betimes; that Christ be formed in their souls when they are young, and they may be sanctified from their infancy. *They are thine, save them.*[y] Ishmael was very young when Abraham prayed so affectionately, *O that Ishmael might live before thee!*[z]

Our children are capable of being prayed for, and of receiving benefit by prayer, before they are capable of being taught, and of receiving benefit by instruction: and as their being baptized lays us under an engagement to teach them, so it gives us an encouragement to pray for them; and we should begin early to do it. Look up to Christ, and beg of him to bless them with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, which will be the best provision and the best portion for them.

Be *constant* in praying for your children; pray for them as duly as for yourselves, as St. Paul for his friends, making mention of them always in every prayer. Be *particular* in praying for them; pray for each particular child, as holy Job offered burnt-offerings for his sons, according to the number of them all;[a] that you may be able to say, as Hannah, *For this child I prayed:*[b] pray for particular blessings for your children, according as you see their case requires, for *that* grace which you observe their natural temper (or distemper rather) calls for.

Let us take heed lest our prayers degenerate into formality, and we pray for them only from custom, and in no better manner than we can soon teach them to pray for themselves, and for us too, by rote: but let us pray for them, from a principle of concern for their precious souls; in the prosperity and welfare of which *their* happiness, and *our* comfort in them, is bound up. When a child is born, there is a candle lighted that must burn to eternity, either in heaven or hell; the consideration whereof should awaken us to pray with all possible earnestness for the salvation of their souls, next to that of our own.

When they are *little*, they cannot pray for themselves; and if you *do not* pray for them, who *should?* When they are *grown up*, it may be they are careless, and will not pray for themselves to any purpose, and then their case is the more piteous; it may be they are wicked and profane, and hate prayer, yet continue to pray for them, for while there is life there is hope, and while there is hope, there is room for prayer; and who knows but he who waits to be gracious, may at length be gracious to you, and your child that is dead may be alive again.[c]

Have an eye to Christ in all your prayers for your children; let the prayer be directed to *him*, as it was here. It was in his name particularly that they were baptized, and therefore in his name they must be prayed for, and into his hands all our petitions to God must be put. We may with him plead their baptism: "Lord, they are given up to thee to be thine; make them thine own, then own them as thine." Plead his interest in them as the children of his family, the lambs of his flock, the pets of his school; plead your dedication of them to him, and his acceptance of them; and resolve to leave them with him.

It is by prayer that we *cast our care* upon God; cast it upon the Lord Jesus, to whom the Father has committed all judgment, and who is intrusted with the administration of the providential kingdom, in subserviency to the mediatorial kingdom. Our children are a considerable part of our care; what they will prove, and what will become of them: we must by prayer cast this care upon Christ; and believe that the children of the greatest are not above the need of his care, nor those of the meanest beneath the cognizance of it.

3. We must bring them to Christ, by submitting them to the disposal of his providence. When we have by prayer sought to him *for* them, we must by a cheerful acquiescence in his wisdom and goodness, make ourselves easy concerning them; believing, that Christ knows what is fit for them and us, better than we do. We bring them to Christ, when we bring our will, concerning them, into an entire submission to his will; believing that he will be sanctified, and resolving that then we will be satisfied.[d]

Let us make Christ guardian to our children, not only when we are dead, but while we live; trust them with him, and put them under his protection; as Jacob did his children when he was parting with them, *God Almighty give you mercy!*[e] and when he was parting from them, *The Angel that redeemed me from all evil*[f] (and that can be no other than the Lord Jesus, the angel of the covenant) *bless the lads!*

When we can refer it to the divine will, whether our children shall be healthful or sickly, high or low, rich or poor, prosperous or crossed, thriving or declining in the world; whether they shall live to

v Matt. xvii. 15. w Matt. xv. 22. x Rom. viii. 6.
y Ps. cxix. 94. z Gen. xvii. 18. a Job i. 5.
b 1 Sam i. 27. c 2 Sam. xii. 22. d Lev. x. 3.
e Gen. xliii. 14. f Gen. xlviii. 16.

be old, or die young; provided it may but go well with their precious souls, and they may be happy to eternity; then we bring them to Christ, as a skilful, faithful Physician, willing he should take what method he pleases with them, so he will but cure them, and save them. I have read of a good man, whose son being disposed of in the world, met with great affliction, which he once very feelingly complained of to his good father, who answered, (according to the principle I am now upon,) "Any thing, child, to bring thee to heaven."

4. We must bring them to Christ, by subjecting them, as far as we can, to the government of his grace. Having laid their necks under the yoke of Christ in their baptism, we must teach them to draw in it, and use our interest in them, and authority over them, to keep them under that easy yoke, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of our Lord Jesus.[g]

Having got them enrolled among his servants, we must teach them, betimes, to know their Master, and to own his dominion over them, and their obligations to him; bring them into their Master's presence, bring them to see him, bring them to hear him, by bringing them to his word and ordinances. Feed your kids beside the shepherds' tents;[h] let them have family instruction, as soon as they are capable of receiving it, and be brought to sit under the public ministry, as soon as they are capable of not being a disturbance to it.

Bring them to Christ's feet, by taking pains to impress upon their minds the indispensable necessity of their being taught and ruled by Jesus Christ, of their believing his truths, and obeying his laws, in order to their present and eternal welfare. We brought them to Christ, by an instituted *sign* of their being his, in their baptism; we bring them to Christ, by the instituted *means* of their being his, in their religious education; both those we second with prayer, that they may be his: thus far we must go, and further we cannot.

II. You see how you may bring your little children to Christ. I come next to show you, for your encouragement, how you may hope he will receive those who are thus brought to him, and what entertainment they may expect; surely, something like the kind entertainment he here gave to these little ones: He took them up in his arms, put his hand upon them, and blessed them. Such visible, sensible signs of his favour we are not now to expect, but *that* which is more than equivalent in spiritual blessings.

Only let me premise, that we cannot be so confident of God's giving his grace to our children, if we in sincerity pray to him for it, and use the means, as we may be of his giving it to ourselves, if we do so. Many a godly parent no doubt has brought his children to Christ, as before directed, who, yet, have proved wicked and vile, and strangers to Christ, and come short of his blessing, but it has been through their own default. Many are sacramentally regenerated, and born again of water, by which they have been partakers of the Christian name, who, yet, are never really regenerated, and born again of the Spirit, but live and die destitute of the nature of Christians. All we can say is, that if we thus bring our children to Christ, they stand much fairer for, and nearer to, his blessing, than if they be not brought to him. There are promises and precedents which we may take encouragements from, and upon which we are caused to hope, that Christ will give them his grace, will work his *good work* in them, both as a token of, and as a qualification for, his *good will* towards them; and if he do, it will be an addition to our comfort, that it is an answer to our prayers, and the fruit of our labours; if he do not, it will be a support to us under our grief, to have the testimony of our conscience that, by the grace of God, we have in some measure done our duty, and then left the event with God, whose grace is his own.

Let us now observe the instance of Christ's favour to these children; and inquire what we may expect that has some resemblance of it.

1. *He took them up in his arms.* See how Christ does more for humble believing supplicants than they can ask or think: it was only desired he would touch them, but he did more, he embraced them; and it speaks not only his wonderful condescension, but his compassion and affection. A little while previously, when he had occasion to set a little child before his disciples as a pattern of humility, he not only set the child in the midst of them, which was sufficient to answer his intention; but he took him in his arms,[k] to show his tender love to those who are as little children. (*When Israel was a child then I loved him.*[l]) This spake the kindness our Saviour[m] had for the human nature and race; his φιλανθρωπια —*his joy* in the *habitable part of the earth*, and his *delight in the sons of men.*[n]

Christ took up these children in his arms as one well pleased with them, and concerned for them; that the Scripture might be fulfilled which said concerning him, *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather his lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom.*[o] Time was, when he himself was taken up in old Simeon's arms.[p] And he did himself pass through the age of infancy, to make it honourable and comfortable to the *children* of his people; and the expressions of his favour afterwards to *little children*, make it much more so: when their mothers and nurses carry them in their arms, and

g Eph. vi. 4. h Cant. i. 8. i John iii. 5.
k Mark ix. 36. l Hos. xi. 1.
m Tit. iii. 3. Prov. viii. 31.
n Isa. xl. 11. p Luke ii. 28.

are almost tired with the load, let them refresh themselves with this thought, that the Holy Child Jesus was carried in arms, and did himself take up little children in his arms. When Moses was charged thus to bear Israel, he found himself aggrieved, *Have I conceived all this people?*[q] *Have I begotten them, that thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom as a nursing father bears the sucking child?* But what Moses complained of, Christ had complacency in; he took them up in his arms: it is but one word in the original, ἐναγκαλισαμενος—*he inarmed* them, he *took them into his embraces;* as he did his spouse, who said with satisfaction, *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*[r]

But *how* may we hope he will take our children in his arms, when we bring them to him? Surely we may promise ourselves no less than what David promised himself, *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.*[s] We may hope,

(1.) That he will take them up in the arms of his *power* and providence; that he will *hold their souls* in life, and protect them from, or carry them through, the weaknesses and perils of the infant age: that he will give *his angels*,[t] the *little ones'*[u] angels, *a charge concerning them*, to bear them in *their arms*;[v] and *their* arms are *his* arms, the arms of his power. The name of the Lord is a strong tower,[w] into which the righteous are not only welcome to run themselves, but to bring their children; and where they and theirs may hope to be safe, so safe, as that no real evil, no only evil, shall befall them. The arm of the Lord is revealed in favour of the little ones, even of a sinful race; witness those of unbelieving murmuring Israel: But your little ones, though living in a barren wilderness, and likely to be made a prey, them will I bring into that land which I have promised, and you have despised.[w] Much more shall it be stretched out for the relief and preservation of the faithful seed, whose refuge the eternal God[x] is, and will be, and underneath them are the everlasting arms; such are the arms of the Lord Jesus, which cannot faint or be weary, and by which all things are upheld, else they would sink.

That Divine Providence which supports children in their childhood, and carries them through that helpless age; which puts it into the hearts of parents to provide for them; which preserves to them their limbs and senses, of which they might, by a thousand accidents, be deprived in a moment; by which they grow in strength and stature; is to be mentioned to the honour of the Redeemer, to whom it is owing that the race of mankind continues *in being* upon the face of the earth, though guilty and obnoxious. It is in the Redeemer's arms, by whom all things consist,[y] that children are borne up, and carried on *to* full age; for to him are owing all the reprieves *of* God's patience,[z] and all the gifts of his common providence. This we have all experienced ourselves, and must acknowledge it with thankfulness to the Redeemer's praise, as the royal Psalmist does: *Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope, and keepest me in safety when I was upon my mother's breast: I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly.*[a] *By thee have I been holden up*, and therefore *my praise shall be continually of thee.*[b] And what we have experienced ourselves, we may humbly expect for our children, if we bring them to Christ, to whom we have brought ourselves.

(2.) That he will take them up in the arms of his *pity* and *grace;* that he will in compassion to their precious souls, the case of which by nature is very piteous, undertake to cleanse and cure them, to sanctify and save them; that, as in his love and pity he has shed his blood to wash from sin, and so prepared the laver, he will, in love *to them*, and pity *to them*, sprinkle that purifying, healing blood upon them, that they may by it be washed from their sin, and sanctified for God, as *their* God.

The loveliest, sweetest babe we ever saw, though like Moses in the ark of bulrushes, exceeding fair, to admiration, yet, like him, it is born in a land of Egypt, in a house of bondage; like him, marked for the sword as soon as born; nay, it is like the infant in Ezekiel's parable, *polluted in its own blood*, and cast out *to the loathing of its person*;[c] it is shapen in iniquity, it is born in sin, and its precious soul is defiled and deformed, and an object of pity. This is a melancholy thought, and a damp to the pleasure we take in our children. But this is a comfort: that Christ has compassion on them, has arms to gather them up in, and has given us hopes that he will say unto them, *Live*, yea, he will say unto them, *Live*;[d] will wash them from their filth, will clothe them with his grace: (and the *time* will be a *time of love* indeed, both to *them* and *us*:) that he will embrace them, as the father of the prodigal did his returning son, when he fell on his neck and kissed him;[e] will receive them into the arms of a covenant of grace, out of which they shall never be plucked, and in which they shall be for ever easy and happy.

2. He put his hands upon them:[f] they desired he would *touch them*, one touch from Christ has done wonders; but he did more, he *put his hands on them*, as he did on John when he said, Fear not; and as he did on many whom he cured; to intimate that virtue went out of him for the purpose to which he intended it.

q Numb. xi. 12. r Cant. ii. 6. s Ps. xxvii. 10.
t Matt. xviii. 10. u Ps. xci. 12. v Prov. xviii. 10.
w Numb. xiv. 31. x Deut. xxxiii. 27.

y Col. i. 16. z 2 Pet. iii. 15. a Ps. xxii. 9, 10.
b Ps. lxxi. 5, 6. c Ezek. xvi. 5, 9. d Ezek. xvi. 9, 10.
e Luke xv. 20. f Rev. i. 17.

But *how* may we hope that Jesus Christ will now put his hands upon us and ours?

(1.) If he set us and ours apart for himself,[g] as his own peculiar people, we may say he puts his hand upon us and ours: as the buyer lays his hand on the goods he has agreed for, they are now his own; as Jacob put his hand on the head of Joseph's sons, to signify not only his blessing them, but his adopting them, and taking them for his own, *Let my name be named upon them.*[h] This we hope Christ does for our children, when we bring them to him; he owns them for his; and we may say they do in some degree belong to Christ, are retainers to his family.

It is an honour and comfort to have our little children called Christians, called by Christ's name; to have them numbered among his peculiar ones, among the servants born in his house, distinguished from the children of heathens, who have not the knowledge of God and Christ; to have them added to the church, which is God's treasure in the world; planted in his vineyard, sown in his field, to be a holy seed, a seed for God; especially if we have some good hopes, through grace, that they are not only admitted to a place in the courts of God's house now, but are designed for his holy place above, for the congregation of the righteous there. If Christ will but put his hand upon them, and say, They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels,[l] we have enough, we have all we wished for in bringing them to him.

(2.) If he give his Holy Spirit to us and ours, it may truly be said, he puts his hand upon us and them. The Spirit is sometimes called the *finger of God*, and sometimes the *hand of God*;[k] so that Christ's putting his hand upon us,[l] not only puts us into a relation to him, but works a real change in us; lays hold on the soul for him, and puts his *image*, as well as *superscription*, upon it. The laying on of hands was a ceremony used in conferring the Holy Ghost; and this we pray for, and hope for, from Christ, for our children, when we bring them to him.

And there are *words* upon which he has encouraged us to hope for this. We find it possible that children may be sanctified from their birth,[m] that they may be filled with the Holy Ghost from their mother's womb;[n] nay, we find it promised, That God will pour his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing, that blessing, that blessing of blessings, upon our offspring:[o] that *his Spirit upon thee* shall *not depart from thy seed*:[p] that his Spirit shall be poured out upon our sons and daughters:[q] that our children shall all be taught of the Lord, and great shall be their peace:[r] the *New-Testament* promise is to us and to our children; not only *that* of the forgiveness of sins, but *that* of the gift of the Holy Ghost.[s] These are the true sayings of God; and we may put them in suit, and expect the performance of them for our children, when we bring them to Christ. And O that he would thus *put his hand upon them.*

3. He blessed them. He was desired to pray for a blessing for them, but he did more, he commanded[t] the blessing, blessed with authority; he pronounced them blessed, and thereby made them so; for those whom he blesseth are blessed indeed. Christ is the great High Priest, whose office it is to bless the people of God, and all theirs. When he parted from his disciples at his ascension, he blessed them;[u] he left blessings behind him for his church on earth, and all the members of it the little ones not excepted.

When God took Abraham into covenant, he promised to bless him; and the blessing wherewith he blessed him was, *I will be a God to thee and to thy seed*:[v] but that was not all, he promised that in the Messiah, who should descend from his loins, all the nations of the earth should be blessed;[w] not only blessed *by* him, but blessed *in* him, in that righteousness and salvation which should be wrought out and brought in by him. The transferring of this blessing was the great care and business of the patriarchs; Jacob and Esau strove for it, and Jacob got it; the Jews sinned it away, for themselves, but not for the world; and therefore, by the gospel, this blessing of Abraham comes upon the Gentiles,[x] that comprehensive blessing, that God will be a God to them who believe, and to their seed: this blessing Christ has the conferring of, for he is the Mediator of the covenant, and Trustee of the blessings of it. Now if we, in faith, bring our children to him, as Mediator, we may hope he will bestow this blessing upon *them* with other the children of the church; for St. Peter gives the *Jews* this reason why God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless *them*, because they were the children of the prophets, and of the covenant.[y] Now if we and ours be children of the prophets, and of the covenant, *of* the prophets by our assent to gospel truths; and of the covenant, by our consent to gospel terms, we may hope to inherit (and our seed after us) that blessing which Christ was sent to bestow.

The prayers made by the Israel of God, for all its members, from the *least* to the greatest, are encouraging to our hopes that they shall share in the blessing: our children are not only prayed for by us, as parts of our family, but they are prayed for by all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ,[z] their Lord and ours, as belonging to Christ's family,

g Ps. iv. 3. h Gen. xlviii. 16. i Mal. iii. 17. k Luke xi. 20. l Ezek. iii. 14. m Jer. i. 5. n Luke i. 15. o Isa. xliv. 3. p Isa. lix. 21. q Joel ii. 28. r Isa. liv. 13. s Acts ii. 38, 39. t Ps. cxxxiii. 3. u Luke xxiv. 50. v Gen xvii. 7. w Gen. xii. 2, 3. x Gal. iii. 14. y Acts iii. 25, 26. z 1 Cor. i. 2.

to the *nursery* in that family; the welfare and prosperity of which, all who are concerned for the perpetuating of Christ's name and throne, cannot but have a particular and tender concern for. In bringing them to Christ, we bring them within the prayers of all good Christians; which we hope may obtain a blessing for them.

The promises made to the Israel of God are yet more encouraging; especially since Christ came to *confirm the promises* made to the fathers,[a] that in him they might be *Yea* and *Amen*. Now it is promised, that the *generation of the upright shall be blessed*;[b] that the *seed of God's servants* shall be *established before him*;[c] that they shall be so remarkably pious and prosperous, that *all who see them shall acknowledge them*,[d] *that they are the seed which the Lord has blessed*. Lord, be it unto thy servants according to the word which thou hast spoken.

III. THE APPLICATION.

1. Let me hence address myself to children, to little children, to the lambs of the flock, to the youngest who can hear with understanding:[e] will not you be glad to hear this, that the Lord Jesus Christ has a tender concern and affection for you; and that he has blessings in store for you, if you apply yourselves to him, according to your capacity? Shall I speak to you in the words of David? *Come ye children, hearken to me, and I will teach you*,[f] as young as you are, *the fear of the Lord*; nay, I would teach you not only the fear of God, but the faith of Christ; and therefore address myself to you, in the words of St. Paul, *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you*,[g] till his image be renewed upon you, and he live in you.[h]

You hear, dear little ones, what Christ has done for you, what favour he has showed to those of *your age*: and will not you put in for an interest in his favour, and the provisions he has made for the entertainment of children? Has he thus loved you, and will not you love him? Has he such kind thoughts toward you, and will not you have dutiful thoughts toward him? Does he invite you to him, and will not you accept of his invitation? He says here: *Suffer little children* not only to be brought to me, but *to come to me*; to come as they can themselves, to make it their own act and deed; and do not forbid them, for it is possible, that of those of their age may be the kingdom of God, that they may get to heaven.

You love those who take notice of you, and play with you, and give you toys; and will you not love those who pray for you, and instruct you, and would bring you to be acquainted with the best things? Will you not reckon them your friends indeed, who seek the welfare of your souls, your eternal welfare?

Be sensible betimes of the corruption of your nature, that *foolishness is bound in your heart*; and give all diligence to get a change wrought in you. Begin betimes to put a difference between God's name and other names, God's book and other books, God's day and other days. Be dutiful to your parents, and labour to be a comfort to them. Love prayer, learn to pray, and be much in it. Mortify your passions, keep them under, and do not indulge them. Hate and abhor lying, and make conscience of speaking truth.

There are little books, both of counsels and examples, suited to your age: "*The Token for Children*," by Mr. Janeway, and Mr. White's *Little Book for Little Children*; which you should not be strangers to. Love your *catechism*, and hold fast the form of sound words, which you have heard; but above all, see to it that from your childhood you know the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise to salvation.

Lay yourselves at Christ's feet, and he will take you up in his arms. Give yourselves to him, and he will give himself in his graces and comforts to you. Lie in his way, by a diligent attendance on his ordinances, and he will not pass by without putting his hand on you. And if you value his blessings aright, and be earnest with him for his blessings, he will bless you with the best of blessings, such as will make you eternally blessed.

2. This passage affords both direction and encouragement to Christian parents: *I write unto you fathers*, and unto you mothers, who have a tender concern for your children, and desire they may do well, and would fain do well for them. Observe the entertainment Christ gave to the children who were brought to him, and see it written *for your learning*.

(1.) Let this direct us, who are parents, concerning our children. We have seen *how* we are to bring them to Christ; and have we *thus* brought them to him? We brought them to baptism; but did we thereupon bring them to Christ? Was it done as unto the Lord? If it was, let us now make it to appear. Have we brought our children to Christ, with hopes that they have been accepted of him?

[1.] Let us then still *bring them to him*, by faith and prayer, according as their case requires; be daily *laying them at his feet*, by resigning them to his conduct, and referring all events concerning them to his wise and gracious disposal; be daily *putting them in his arms*, by entreating his favour towards them, as that which is the life of their souls, and better than the life of the body.

You see here *what* to desire and pray for, for your children: *that the Mediator's blessing may be their portion*; for that is a portion for the soul and eternity, a good part that shall never be taken away from those who have it. Covet not *great things in*

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[a] Rom. xv. 8. [b] Ps. cxii. 2.
[c] Ps. cii. 28. [d] Isa. vi. 9.
[e] Neh. viii. 2. [f] Ps. xxxiv. 11.
[g] Gal. iv. 19. [h] Gal. ii. 20.

*the world* for them, a little will serve to bear their charges through it; but be earnest with God for blessings for them *in heavenly things by Christ Jesus;* let them have these, and they have enough.

When you bless your children, (and it is good sometimes to do it solemnly,) let your eye be to Christ, in whom alone it is that blessings are entailed on us and ours, and through whose hand they are derived. The patriarchs in blessing their sons had an eye to a Christ to come; and to him, now he is come, much more ought *we* to have an eye.

Pray daily with your children, and servants; that they may hear you pray for them, and may thereby be taught and quickened to pray for themselves. I hope none of you dare live in the neglect of family prayer, dare omit it, either morning or evening, when you know that, instead of the blessing of Christ, the wrath and curse of God is poured out on the families that call not on his name.[i] While you and your families live without prayer, you live without God; you make no joint acknowledgment of him, and can expect no joint receiving from him. It may justly be feared that those who throw aside so necessary, so comfortable, so advantageous a duty as family prayer is, do not make conscience of secret prayer neither, but frequently omit it, or at least do not make a business of it, but suffer it to degenerate into a formality. And how can you expect *daily blessings* upon your children, if you do not *daily* ask for them? or to have an interest in the intercession which Jesus Christ is continually making for us in heaven, if you do not pray continually morning and evening, in the virtue of that intercession. Have you settled a correspondence between Christ and your families, by devoting your children to him in their baptism? and will you not keep up that correspondence? How can you expect the benefit of it, if you do not on your part keep it up?

You who have the charge of families, remember that you are Christians, and ought in that capacity to confess Christ, and to own and honour him before your families. There is such a general disuse of Christian conference, that most are ashamed by that to acknowledge Christ before their neighbours; but they cannot have that pretence to decline it before their own children and servants. If therefore with the heart you believe unto righteousness,[k] think how necessary it is, that thus with the mouth you make confession unto salvation. Remember that your family is a family of *Christians*, not a herd *of negroes*, I should say a herd of *brute beasts;* (for those who have charge of negroes ought to pray for them, and to have them prayed with;) and you look upon them as no better than brute beasts, if you do not pray with them; nay, and worse, for the ox knows his *owner*, and the ass his *master's crib*,[l] but you go not before them in acknowledging their *great Owner*, nor lead them to the footstool of *their Master's throne of grace*. But I hope better things of you.

Use the baptism of your children, as an argument with yourselves to pray with them; and then you may use it as a plea with God, for the mercies you ask of him for them. "Lord Jesus, I have presented my children to thee, and thou hast accepted them. I still present them to thee, and wilt not thou still accept them? Thou hast blessed them: wilt thou not say they shall be blessed? and then they are blessed indeed."

[2.] Let us then bring them up for him. Have we any good hope, through grace, that Christ has owned our dedication of ours to him, has taken them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them? let us then receive each of them from him again, as given to us with the same charge that Pharaoh's daughter gave to Moses's mother, *Take this child and nurse it for me*. You are to look upon your children as given up to Christ, and to manage them accordingly.

Has Christ showed such a tender affection to your little children? be not you then hardened against them, do not rule them with rigour; provoke them not to wrath,[m] lest they be discouraged. Be gentle among them, for so the nurse cherishes her children.[n] Study to make your children love you; and then every thing you enjoin them will be easy. When you are angry at them, let it be for that only, for which you know Christ would be angry at them; and that is for their sins, which must be restrained by the rod and reproof, not for their weaknesses and childish infirmities, which time will wear off. Has Christ blessed your children, and put honour upon them? Do not you curse them, and give them such scurrilous language as Saul gave to his son Jonathan,[o] lest you teach them to give the like to their inferiors. *Bless; and curse not.*

Have you given your children up to Christ? bring them up then in his nurture and admonition. It is not enough that you pray with them and for them daily, but you must daily instruct them in the things of God, and in all those things that will be profitable to them. It is observable, that immediately after the laying down of that great truth, *That the Lord our God is one Lord*, and of that great law, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart*, it follows, as an indispensable duty, and a means of keeping up religion in the world, *Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children:* and look upon it to be one of the most needful pieces of work thou hast to do; more needful to get the knowledge of God for them, than to get estates for them, nay, than to

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i Jer. x. 25. k Rom. x. 10. l Isa. i. 3. m Eph. vi. 4. n 1 Thess. ii. 7. o 1 Sam. xx. 30.

get bread for them. Thou shalt therefore not only hear them their catechism once a week, but thou shalt talk freely and familiarly of the truths and laws of God among them, with all gravity and seriousness, *when thou sittest* with them in thy house, and *when thou walkest* with them by the way.[p] At night *when thou liest down*, read a portion of Scripture to them, and oblige them to take notice of it; and again in the morning *when thou risest up*; that thus the word of Christ might dwell in them richly. You know they cannot learn Latin, but they must go to school every day; nor learn a trade, but must go to shop every day; and ought they not to have daily instructions out of the word of God, in order to their getting the knowledge of Christ, which is infinitely more excellent?

Take particular care to bring your children acquainted with Jesus Christ, the true treasure hid in the field of the Scriptures; Christ and him crucified, Christ and him glorified. You call the baptizing of your children, the *christening* of them. I wish you would consider it; and think, how little it will avail them to have been christened, if they do not learn Christ, if they be not taught the truth as it is in Jesus.[q] Let not your children rest in a mere natural religion; that is *good*, it is necessary, but it is not enough. You must make them sensible of their need of Christ, of their lost and undone condition without him; must endeavour to lead them into the mysteries of our reconciliation to God, and our redemption from sin and wrath, by a Mediator; and O that they may experimentally know him, and the power of his resurrection!

In teaching children the knowledge of God, both the parents are concerned to do their part. Solomon speaks both of the instruction of the father, and the law of the mother;[r] but when they are little, the mother has a greater opportunity of instilling into them that which is good, and ought to improve it. Timothy got to know the Holy Scriptures from his childhood, by being brought up under a good mother and grandmother;[s] and king Lemuel, when he is come to the throne, forgets not the prophecy that his mother taught him.[t]

And as in other accomplishments of your children, so in the business of religion, which is their best and true accomplishment, you must, as they come to be capable, put them on to advance. When they have gone through their learning, you put them into business; when they have served their apprenticeship, you set them up for themselves; and thus when you have brought them to some competent knowledge of Christ, and have some reason to hope that the Spirit of grace has begun a good work in their souls, persuade them to take the covenant of baptism upon themselves, in the use of the other seal, that of the Lord's supper, and so by their own act and deed to join themselves to the Lord. Tel. them, "You brought them to Christ when they were infants, you have been ever since showing them the way to him, and now they must come themselves to him. Though they be weak, if they be willing," you may assure them, "they shall be welcome; for those who come unto him he will not, no, he will not cast them out."[u] If they sit down at his feet to hear his words, he will take them up in his arms, and bless them."

And there is one thing more, in which I must be a monitor, particularly; else I should not be a faithful monitor to parents, who have brought their children to Christ, and who hope that he has blessed them, and that is, that they be careful how they dispose of them in the world when they are grown up, lest by an error here, they undo all that they have been doing for them. In putting them apprentices, placing them in callings, and in marrying them, let Christ be consulted about it; let the interests of the better part be consulted in it. That is best for them which is best for their souls, against which you should not be swayed by any worldly interests or regards whatsoever. If you have laid a good foundation, let it be your care and endeavour that it may be built upon.

(2.) Let this encourage us, who are parents, concerning our children; and enable us to think of them with comfort and hope, in the midst of our cares about them. They are dear to us, we look with pleasure upon these olive plants round about our tables, yet not without a mixture of pain, because children are (as we commonly say) "certain cares, but uncertain comforts;" these arrows in the hand, may prove arrows in the heart;[v] Absalom, whose name signifies *The peace of his father*, lived to be his greatest trouble. But when we consider that we have brought them to Christ, and he has received them, we cannot but thank God and take courage. When we *wish* well to them, we would willingly *hope* well; and this is ground of hope, *that our Lord Jesus has expressed so much favour to little children.*

[1.] *This* may comfort and encourage the tender careful mothers in nursing them, *that they are carrying those in their arms whom Christ has taken up in his.* Not only their *natural affection* to them, as pieces of themselves, may sweeten and ease the pains they take about them; *that* makes even the *sea monsters draw out their breasts and give suck to their young*;[w] but their *gracious affection* to them as members of Christ, as beloved of him, and partakers of benefit[x] by him, may much more do it. You are *careful for them with all this care;* they require a constant attendance, and many a time, it may be,

p Deut. vi. 4—7. q Eph. iv. 20, 21. r Prov. i. 8.
s 2 Tim. i. 5. t Prov. xxxi. 1.

u John vi. 37. οὐ μή, a double negative. v Ps cxxvii. 4.
w Lam. iv. 3. x 1 Tim. vi. 1.

break your *sleep;* but if you do it as unto the Lord, if you have an eye to Christ in it, "This I do for a child that is adopted into his family, as well as born into mine;" you may depend upon him to pay you your wages,[y] though it be your own child. Your care about your little ones keeps you from church, it may be, many a time; and keeps you, that you cannot spend so much time in your closets as you used to do; but if thus it be sanctified by an eye to our Lord Jesus, and by your prayers to God for them as his, more than as your own, you are therein truly serving the Lord Christ yourselves, and not only so, but are breeding up servants for him, that you hope will be vessels of grace and glory.

[2.] *This* may comfort and encourage us if our children labour under *any* bodily weaknesses and infirmities, if they be unhealthful and often ailing, which is an allay to our comfort in them; let this serve to balance that, *If they belong to Christ, and be blessed of him, they are blessed indeed;* and nothing amiss of that kind shall be any prejudice to their blessedness, or diminution of it, but may, being sanctified, become rather a friend and furtherance to it. Many have been the wiser and better, the more humble and heavenly, for their having borne the yoke of affliction in their youth.[z] You see what an affection Christ discovered for these children; and may conclude, by reflecting upon yourselves, that he has a particular tenderness for children in affliction; those are commonly most indulged by their parents that are *sickly;* and like as a father pities *those* children,[a] so does the Lord Jesus much more, as he often evidenced when he was upon earth. As the abiding illnesses of the children are the parents' continual affliction, it is a cross they are to take up daily; so the abiding compassions of Christ toward them, ought to be their continual consolation, and a cordial they may have recourse to daily.

[3.] *This* may comfort and encourage us in teaching and catechising our children, in giving them a pious education, and in praying with them and for them, *that we are doing it for Christ, that we are workers together with him.* And we may hope he will work together with us, and then our labour shall not be in vain. If we have given them to Christ, they shall be taught by his Spirit, and are within the reach of that precious promise, that all shall know God, from the least even to the greatest.[b] It may be they are dull and slow, and not so apt to learn as we could wish: Christ's own disciples were so, yet he bore with them, and brought them at last to a *full assurance of understanding;* and therefore despair not concerning your children who are but of a small capacity. It may be your children are hopeful and forward, and very promising; and it is your joy to see it, in hopes they will be ornaments to your families, but it ought to be much more so, in hopes they will be, in their day, faithful servants to the interest of God's kingdom among men. And what prospect can be more pleasing next to that of our own everlasting bliss, than to have good hope, through grace, that our children shall be praising God on earth, when we are praising him in heaven; and that we and they shall be, together, for ever praising him. *I have no greater joy,* says the apostle, *than to hear that my children walk in the truth.*

[4.] *This* may comfort and encourage us in all our cares concerning our children when they grow up, in providing for them, and disposing of them. If we have in sincerity given them up to Christ, and he has accepted of them, *we may hope, he will dispose of every thing that concerns them for the best,* and they shall in this world reap the benefit of the promises made *to* the faithful *and* their seed,[c] and the prayers made *by* the faithful *for* their seed. If they be not feasted, yet verily they shall be fed; if we have but little to give them, yet the blessing of Christ upon that little, will make it every way better to them than the riches of many wicked.[d] Many, no doubt, have had reason to acknowledge, that their comfortable passage through this world has been very much owing to the blessing of Christ, upon their early dedication to him, and education for him. If Christ has taken up our little ones into his arms, provided they do not by their wickedness throw themselves out of his arms, we may be sure, he is able to keep what we have committed[e] to him, through all the attempts of an insnaring world; that he will never drop them, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands.

[5.] *This* may comfort and encourage us, if our children be removed from us by death in their childhood; (this is a common case; that which came forth like a flower, is soon cut down, and the gourd which came up one night, and which we were exceeding glad of, withers the next night, and leaves us in tears. Now it is enough to SILENCE us in such a case, that it is the Lord that gave, and the Lord that taketh away, and if he takes away who can hinder him? May he not do what he will with his own? Let Aaron therefore hold his peace,[f] for God is glorified. But *this* goes further, and may SATISFY us;) *that if Christ has owned them in the kingdom of his grace, he will receive them into the kingdom of his glory.* We are indeed kept in the dark concerning the state of those that die in infancy, they are left to the mercy of God; but the children who are given up to Christ by their believing parents, are not left to uncovenanted mercy. *The Lord knows them that are his,* though we do not; but we may hope that it shall go well with those whom Christ has taken up in his arms,

y Exod. ii. 9.
z Lam. iii. 27.
a Ps. ciii. 13.
b Heb. viii. 11.
c Ps. xxxvii. 25, 26.
d Ps. xxxvii. 3, 16.
e John x. 28.
f Lev. x. 3.

and blessed; and, that he was so well pleased with the children's Hosannas, even in the Old Jerusalem, will reckon himself glorified by their *Hallelujahs* in the New Jerusalem.[g]

[6.] *This* may comfort and encourage us if we should be taken away from our children by death, while they are little: (this also is a common case, and a mournful one; we know not how soon we may fall under the arrests of death, and may see the day, that awful day, approaching, which will cut off the number of our months in the midst. In such a case, as to our own souls, we may perhaps be able to say, as our Master did, with an air of triumph, "Now we are no more in this world."[h] O that we may be able, at such a time, with this cheerfulness, to say so! But, though we should, yet, like him concerning his disciples, we must say concerning our children, *But* THESE *are in the world:)* How shall we leave them? Where and with whom shall we leave them? With whom, but with him who has said, *Leave thy fatherless children with me, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me;*[i] who has taken it among the titles of his honour, to be a *Father of the fatherless*, and *a Judge of the widows.*[k] If we have made Christ guardian to our children, let us make it appear we are entirely well satisfied in his wisdom and faithfulness.

But, [7, *& ult.*] *What* may we have to comfort and encourage us, if our children should prove wicked and vile; if they should forsake their God, and the God of their fathers, and walk in the paths of the destroyer, notwithstanding our utmost endeavours to engage them for Christ? It is very often a case in fact; we cannot deny it; it is possible the best parents may have the worst children; yet if we SHOULD SUPPOSE a falling from *grace and holiness adherent*, which, through the divine condescension and compassion, might have availed to the salvation of such as die in infancy, that WILL NOT INFER a falling from *grace and holiness inherent:* what Christ does *herein*, we know not now, but we shall know hereafter.[l] But disputes in this case are cold comforts to the poor parents; whose hearts bleed and break to see the destructive courses which their children take, whom they thought they had lodged safe in the hands of the Mediator, for whom they have prayed many a prayer, and shed many a tear. They thought Christ had taken them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them, but it does not prove so. What shall we say to comfort such?

It may be some satisfaction to them, that however it goes with their children, Christ will be glorified; if they do not give honour to him, he will get him honour upon them. And if God be sanctified we ought to be satisfied, and with reverence to behold both the goodness and severity of God; on them which fall, severity; but towards them who stand, goodness, if they continue in his goodness.[m]

But it will be yet *more* satisfaction to them, if they have the testimony of their consciences for them that they have done their duty; which they did, with a resolution to leave the event with God. They knew they could not give grace to their children; but their hearts can witness for them, that to the best of their power, they digged about these barren trees, and dunged them,[n] as the dresser of the vineyard did; and if they bring forth fruit well, they shall have the comfort, and God the glory; but if not, they must be content to see them cut down, and though they cannot have comfort in that, yet God will have glory, and they acquiesce.

But the greatest comfort of all in such a case is, that the unbelief and disobedience of their children shall not make void God's promise to them, and therefore ought not to make void their comfort in God. *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious.*[o] Abraham is happy in heaven, though there be those in hell who can call Abraham father. It was the comfort of holy David, though he saw a great deal of sin and trouble in his family, *Although my house be not so with God* as I could wish it, yet I am sure of this, *he has made with me an everlasting covenant, which is well ordered in all things and sure, and that is all my salvation*, and therefore shall be *all my desire.*[p]

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g Matt. xxi. 15, 16. h John xvii. 11. i Jer xlix. 11.
k Ps. lxviii. 5. l John xiii. 17.
m Rom. xi. 22. n Luke xiii. 8, 9.
o Isa. xlix. 5. p 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

# MEMOIRS OF MRS. RADFORD.

(FROM A COPY IN MRS. SAVAGE'S HAND-WRITING.)

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ELEANOR, the third daughter of Mr. Philip Henry, was born at Broad Oak, July 23d, 1667, being Tuesday. Her father writes in his memorandum of it, "Blessed be God, who was present in the time of need."

She was baptized privately, July 27th, by Mr. Jonathan Edwards, of Jesus College, in Oxford.

Her natural temper, from a child, was timorous.

She had her name Eleanor appointed her by the last will of her grandfather, who died half a year before she was born.

While she was a child, she had frequent illness, which the Lord graciously brought her through. She was of a very tender, loving, and towardly disposition, and became acquainted betimes with the things of God, of which, through her great modesty and self-diffidence, she was not very forward to express herself, but very sincere and industrious in her converse with them.

She began early to write sermons, and the daily family expositions of the Scripture, and what she wrote she made use of; for while she lived, in her daily reading of the Scriptures in her closet, she read along with them the expositions she had written. She gathered, in writing, what she thought observable in the books she read, or in the papers communicated to her, and kept it together.

She was married to Mr. Samuel Radford, a tradesman in Chester, January 1st, 1688-9; and as, by the grace of God, she was enabled to do the duty of, so she had abundance of comfort in, that relation.

What account we can find among her papers since her death, concerning her spiritual state, and her communion with God, is only a constant register which she kept of all her approaches to the Lord's Supper. She made her first approach in the seventeenth year of her age, and then writes thus:

"I was advised by my father to put these three questions to myself, for my help in preparation, and to examine myself upon them: What am I? What have I done? and, What do I want? And by these three questions I did search and try myself, according to my weak ability, and what was amiss therein I humbly beg of God to pardon.

"*Question 1st.* WHAT AM I? Am I in a state of sin, or in a state of grace; a child of God, or a child of the devil? Have I renounced *all* for Christ?

"*Answer.* I hope I can say, in the truth and uprightness of my soul, that I have renounced all my sins, and taken Jesus Christ to be mine, and given up myself to him to be his.

"*Question 2nd.* WHAT HAVE I DONE?

"*Answer.* God knows, and my own conscience knows, how greatly I have sinned against, and provoked, the pure eyes of his glory.

"1. The sin of my nature testifies against me, and I desire to testify against it. Lord, forgive the sinfulness of my nature.

"2. The numberless number of actual transgressions which I have been guilty of.

"In *thought:* Which of the commandments have I not broken? Who can understand my heart sins?

"In *word:* Telling untruths—some, since I have known to do better. I am convinced that my vain and idle words must come into judgment, and my idle unprofitable letters too.

"In *deed: Omitting known duties.* I have not been so frequent and constant as I should have been, in the duty of secret prayer; in reading God's word, and singing his praises alone. *Committing known sins.* I have not carried it aright towards my relations, superiors, inferiors, and equals. I have not been diligent to use my uttermost endeavours, as I should have done, for the salvation of the souls of those with whom I have conversed. I have always had too good an opinion of myself. Lord, humble me for my pride. I have enjoyed great means of knowledge, and yet am very ignorant of what I might and should have known. I have often quenched the motions of the Spirit, and not hearkened to the voice of my own conscience. *Lord, who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.* My sins have been more aggravated than the sins of others, having been committed against

light and conviction. Having drawn up this bill of indictment against myself, next comes in,

"*Question* 3*d*. WHAT DO I WANT?

"1. I want pardon for these and all my sins.

"2. An interest in Christ, as my Redeemer and Saviour.

"3. I want to have my strong corruptions weakened;

"4. And my weak graces strengthened.

"These, and many more, I expect, and desire, to have supplied at the Lord's table.

"The Lord will supply all my wants out of his fulness. Amen. I was admitted to the Lord's table this February 17th, 1683-4, where I felt unspeakable sweetness; then and there the knot was tied, and the bargain made, which I would not release for a thousand worlds. I desire from the bottom of my soul, to bless God that ever I knew the meaning of a sacrament. I have this day felt that in my soul, which did much warm and refresh me, namely, a full persuasion of the love of God to me; and I desire to love him better than ever. I have heartily closed with him to-day: my soul hath said, *None but Christ, none but Christ.* The Lord make my heart more and more sound herein. The exhortation was that of Christ's, *Go and sin no more.*"

On the next opportunity she writes; "I came away greatly comforted, and more sensible of the love of Christ to me, and I hope I shall have cause to bless God for this day as long as I have a day to live. The exhortation was, Psalm lvi. 13. *Thou hast delivered my soul from death, wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?* He that hath done the greater will do the lesser."

On another: "This was a price put into my hand to get wisdom. Blessed be God. The duty pressed was, to continue with Christ in his temptation: the Lord help me so to do."

"Another precious day of grace. I was a guest at the blessed table, and must say, as Mephibosheth, *Who am I, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I am?*"

"Another sweet opportunity, wherein I have, as well as poor I could, given myself to God wholly, only, and for ever. Amen."

On another: "I have to-day, by the unspeakable goodness of my God to me, come away from his table with abundant consolations and satisfaction, because I hope I am in Christ Jesus. I am grieved that I walk no more closely with God. O that the sweetness I have found to-day may engage me to more watchfulness. I have this day, with an eye of faith, seen the great love of Christ to me; I tasted it, and was refreshed. Blessed be God, I had a comfortable day of it; I endeavoured to set faith on work, and came away comforted."

At another time: "A sweet opportunity; the duty pressed was, *Arm yourselves, likewise, with the same mind.*"

At another: "A wonder of mercy, that I, who am not worthy of a crumb from the table, should be admitted to sit at it, and feast, not only with but upon the Lord. How is it? I have renewed my covenant afresh with him, and deliberately chosen him for my treasure; and now, I bless God, I count the world, and all things on this side *him*, but trash."

"Another precious opportunity. The duty pressed was, *To work out my own salvation with fear and trembling.* The Lord help me in it, *and work in me both to will and to do.*"

At another: "From Phil. iv. 1. *So stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*"

At another: "The exhortation was from Ps. cxvi. 16, *Truly I am thy servant.*"

At another: "From 1 Samuel xii. 24. *Only fear the Lord.*"

At another: "From Romans xii. 1. *Present your bodies a living sacrifice.*"

At another: "This was an avouching day: I did afresh take God to be mine. The Scripture closed with was Deut. xxvi. 17. *Thou hast avouched the Lord.*"

At another: "Job x. 15. *If I be wicked, woe to* me. Woe, and a thousand woes to me, if *I* be wicked. *I* that have known more and professed more, and been more convinced than others. *I* that have had so many mercies from God, and so oft renewed my covenants with him. If *I* be wicked and must go to hell at last, (as all that are wicked must,) it will be hell indeed to *me.*"

At another time: "I was minded of that great duty, in *all my ways to acknowledge God*, from Prov. iii. 6."

"I was exhorted, from Hebrews xii. 1. to *lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset me.*

"From 1 John i. 12. *Not to sin.*

"From Psalm xxxi. 23. *To love the Lord.*

"From Rom. viii. 1. *To walk after the Spirit.*

"From 1 Cor. xv. 58. *To abound in the work of the Lord.*

"From 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *To live to Christ.*

"From 1 Thess. iv. 1. *To walk so as to please God.*

"From Colos. iii. 1—3. *To seek the things above.*

"From 2 Peter iii. 18. *To grow in grace.*

"From Ephes. v. 15, 16. *To walk circumspectly.*

"From Ephes. iv. 22, 23. *To put off the old man, and to put on the new man.* I hope I have done that to-day, which I shall have cause to bless God for to eternity.

"From 1 Cor. x. 12. *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*

"A sealing day; the Lord did accept, and pardon. I did endeavour to give myself to Christ, deliberately, sincerely, freely, and, it shall be, for ever. The Lord keep it always in the imagination of the thoughts of my heart, and establish my way before him."

At another: "The exhortation was, from 1 Peter i. 13. *Gird up the loins of your mind.* It was a sweet opportunity. What I have in hand is nothing to what I have in hope. *Not unto me, O Lord, but to thy name be the praise.* I had the comfort; God shall have the glory."

At another: "1 Peter i. 22. *Love one another.* I was dead and cold at the ordinance, I would endeavour to make up what was amiss by after-diligence, The Lord set in with me."

"2 Samuel xxiii. 5. *Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant.* I did afresh take God the Father to be my chiefest good and highest end; God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour; God the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide, and Comforter; God's word to be my rule in all my actions, and his people to be my people in all conditions. The exhortation was, to join in the angels' song, Luke ii. 14. *Glory to God in the highest.*"

Thus far before she was married.

At another time: "The exhortation was, Ps. lxxxv. 8. *Not to return again to folly.* All sin is folly, but sin, after God hath spoken peace, is folly with a witness."

At another time: "From Hosea xiv. 8. *To have no more to do with idols.* From Psalm xxiii. 6. *To dwell in the house of the Lord.* From Colos. ii. 6, 7. *To walk in Christ with thanksgiving.* From Isa. ii. 5, 6. *Walk in the light of the Lord;* that is, 1st. To walk closely in my family, in my shop. 2d. To walk comfortably; for God would have his people a comfortable people. From John viii. 10. *To go and sin no more.*"

At another: "I was very dull and drowsy some part of the time, but came away rejoicing that I had what I came for. The Lord help me to be the more busy after. The Scripture closed with was Romans vi. 12."

At another; "The exhortation was from 1 Peter ii. 9. *To show forth the praises of him who hath called us.*"

"From Joshua xxiv. 21—23. *Ye are witnesses.*"

"From Deut. xxix. 9. *Keep the words of this covenant.*"

"From Gen. xxix. 1. *Then Jacob went on his way. Margin,* Then Jacob *lift up his feet.* When he had that view of God, chap. xxviii. 12. and made that vow to God, chap. xxviii. 20. *then* he lift up his feet."

"From Jer. xiii. 11. *To be unto him for a name and for a praise,* and, therefore, to abstain from those things which make a dishonour and disgrace to God, and to abound in those things which are for his honour."

"From Eccl. viii. 11. *Keep the king's commandment, because of the oath of God.*"

"From 2 Timothy ii. 3. *To endure hardness.*"

"From 2 Chron. xv. 14, 15. *To seek with my whole heart.* The Lord grant that the impressions of this ordinance may not wear off."

"From 1 Cor. v. 11. *To purge out the old leaven.*"

"From Daniel xii. 13. *Go thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest.*"

The last she received was July 4th, 1697. "The exhortation was from the practice of the eunuch, Acts viii. 39. *He went on his way rejoicing.*"

These are some of the memorandums she kept of these opportunities.

In her letters to her sisters there are many very savoury, pious expressions, that speak what her heart was full of.

"This is the world of troubles and disappointments. I never saw so much of it as now. I desire your prayers for me, that I may be weaned from it more and more.

"I desire to be content in the place where God hath set me. O that I had wisdom to do the duty of it. I see we must not have every thing that we would have in this world."

She was seized with a fever, as it proved, though little suspected of several days, August 1st, 1697.

In the beginning of her illness she often expressed an entire submission to the will of God, however he should please to dispose of her.

It was the ninth or tenth day of her illness before it appeared perilous, and then it grew violent, and seized her head.

She breathed out her soul into the embraces of the Lord Jesus, August 13th, being Friday, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon.

She was buried in St. Michael's Church, Chester, August 16th, being Monday.

Mr. James Owen preached her funeral sermon that evening, at her brother's meeting-place, on Rev. ii. 7. *To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life.*

# MEMOIRS OF MRS. HULTON.

ANN, the youngest daughter of Mr. Philip Henry, was born at Broad Oak, November 25th, 1668; she was baptized by her father privately. When she was about a year old, she was sick and nigh unto death of an ague, on which he notes, "that she was freely given up to the will of God. Lord, do thy pleasure with me and mine, but contend not with a dry leaf."

He hath noted another ill fit she had when about a year and a half old, and adds, "No sooner doth any thing ail my children but I am presently thinking it is for death. My own guilt, and sense of my unworthiness, causes such misgivings, 1 Kings xvii. 18. but God is good."

She gave very early indications of a sweet and towardly disposition, and an aptness to learn above most of her sex and age, which induced her father, after she had learned to read English well, before she began to sew, to initiate her in the Latin tongue, which she took very easily, but made no great progress in.

From a child she knew the Holy Scriptures, and read them with delight; spoke intelligently of Scripture stories, and was betimes, as soon as she grew to any capacity, very well affected and inclined to the exercises of piety and devotion.

Yet in her own reflections upon her childhood, (written in the year 1688,) though she blesses God for the advantages of a good education, she bewails that the cursed fountain of original sin soon bubbled up. "My childhood and youth" (saith she) "were sinning vanity. I can remember nothing that I did in the world for many years, much less my sins: but when I now see what follies other children are guilty of, I have no reason to think that I came behind them therein." She accuses herself of loving play, and being froward; though few of her age were more mild and tractable, and loved work and a book better than she did.

She soon made her Catechism very familiar to her, and loved to hear and ask questions concerning the things of God. Before seven years old, she learnt to bear her part in the repetitions of the heads of sermons in the family, having the happiness of a very quick understanding, and a good memory.

When she was about eleven years old, she began to write sermons, and continued it all her days. What she wrote was good sense, well spelled, and the substance of a discourse. She kept her sermon-books very carefully, and in good order; she very frequently looked over and conversed with what she had written long before. Read under her own hand the account of the days of her youth. "I soon learned" (saith she) "a course of external duties, and was pleased with the bare performance of the duty without looking at the *manner* how it was done; but at length it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, to call me by his grace, and reveal his Son in me. I cannot be punctual as to the *time*, but rather desire to make sure the *thing*. The merciful circumstances of this good work were, that it was done early in my days, and not attended with such pangs and terrors as some others endure. The Spirit of God convinced me and wrought on me by degrees. Many a time hath God spoken to me in a still small voice, and therein he considered my frame, but the less fine was paid at first, the greater rent I must expect to sit upon afterwards; perhaps, the least terror the more doubts afterwards. I might tell (saith she) long stories of the goodness of God in discovering to me the infinite evil of sin, giving me to mourn over it, quickening me to duty, especially to make sure work about my *foundation*, enabling me to close sincerely with Jesus Christ, which I think I have done as well as I could, though never so well as I would. When God gave me some enlargements in holy duties, I rested much in them, and counted upon comfort and assurance; when, alas! I was not at all ready for it. But oftentimes my secret duties were more long than fervent; more external than internal." She complained to one of her sisters long after, that she found it was possible to lose much time even in the closet. Those that were intimate with her, could not, however, but observe, not only how constant she was to secret worship, and how she abounded in it, but what a discernible pleasure and delight she took in it.

In the sixteenth year of her age, she was admitted to the Lord's supper, February, 1684, and with a great deal of satisfaction both to herself and her

father, joined herself to the Lord in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten. After the second time of her approach to that ordinance, she made this remark of her spiritual state: "I now fell into a very dull and lifeless frame. Drowsiness prevailed much: it was very grievous to me, and after many foils by it, I resolved, with tears, never to yield to it. How I got out of this frame I cannot tell, but this I know, that it was the work of the grace of God. It was a great hinderance to my progress in religion, that I did not open the case of my soul to those that were able to advise me; which proceeded from my reservedness, and has cost me dear. But this I did seriously promise to one that will be a witness against me if I lie, that whereas there are those who make excuses for non-attendance at the gospel-feast, I will not be excused." Afterwards she thus writes —"I was very full of complaints, and empty of praises. I had great supports, but few suavities; some sweet sabbaths and sacraments, but very many damps to my joys. Sin was exceedingly odious to me, and I remembered, with shame, how I had stifled convictions, and how careless and indifferent I had been in matters of religion; how pride and passion had most easily beset me; and how often God had called by his word and I would not hear. The place where I was planted was a vineyard, but it grieved me to think how I had cumbered the ground by my barrenness; yea, brought forth wild grapes by relative miscarriages, and other sins, both of omission and commission. Blessed be God, that which I did I allowed not; with my mind I served the law of God, and delighted in it after the inner man. I esteemed holiness above any thing in the world, and had chosen God for my portion. I smarted greatly for some tongue-sins; some untrue words, though not devised, yet spoken in haste through inadvertency, were as a sharp sword in my bowels, and my bones were broken through my own carelessness. The spirit of bondage long prevailed sadly; it cannot be expressed what straitness of spirit I found; how the wings of faith were clipt, and how the tempter conquered me. But when the sorrow of my spirit even tied my tongue, yet I loved to be alone before God, to be looked on by him; and many a time hath he had pity. I cannot say that ever he was wanting to me, but made all grace to abound towards me. His word has been a means of conviction, of quickening, of comfort to me many a time, and I have found it sweeter than honey or the honey-comb. He restored my soul, he led me in the paths of holiness for his name's sake. It pleased God, some time after this, to make me more than ever sensible of the insufficiency of my own righteousness to justify me, and to show me my need of Christ, and his fulness; so that I counted all things but loss that I might win Christ and be found in him. Thus did the Lord, many a time, wait to be gracious to me, when I was like him who said, *Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?* At length the Holy Spirit, who came to convince the world, was pleased (as at a certain time I was verily persuaded) to convince me of these ten things: viz.

"1. That God is my chiefest good, and that to know, love, and serve him, is my honour and happiness; the greatest I am capable of.

"2. That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; that he is able and willing to save me, and there is salvation in no other.

"3. That religion is the most amiable, pleasant, and beneficial thing in the world.

"4. That much of the power of godliness consists in the great duties of self-denial and mortification.

"5. That I have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and am undone without Christ.

"6. That the favour of God is better than life.

"7. That sin is the worst of evils, exceeding sinful; an evil and an only evil.

"8. That there will be no getting to heaven without much pains and difficulty.

"9. That I shall never be a loser by doing my duty.

"10. That I am infinitely obliged to God, who hath wrought these things in me."

"Now," saith she in her papers, "I fear I did every day act contrary to these convictions, not keeping up a continual watch over myself; but commonly my daily failings passed not without sad reflections. I was solicitous to make sure my being joined to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, and thereupon I did vocally do it in Mr. Alleine's form of words; and did also subscribe with my hand to the Lord, which remains as a witness against me if I be false to it. Renouncing the world and the flesh, I did cleave to God in Christ alone as my sovereign Lord and Ruler, my chiefest good and highest end; and I never repented it, only that I did it no better. God was pleased sometimes gently to correct me by distempers of body, but in much mercy; for I had been as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, knowing neither how to want, nor how to abound; yet now I see he works all for *good*, and do purpose, by his grace, to be well pleased with every thing that happens to me, because it is the will of God."

In a paper written in the year 1688, she thus mentions the advantages of her education:—"I was born of one who had the honour to be of that office who are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ; (2 Cor. iii. 13.) a labourer in the vineyard, though thrust out by men, yet at work in season and out of season; and being it was so, my education was accordingly, *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*"

"As I grew up I have strained at gnats and swallowed camels, often falling into sin. I did not prefer the word of God's mouth to my necessary food.

My own iniquity prevailed, that is, flesh-pleasing in food and apparel, and sinful bashfulness in profitable questions." "Yet," she adds, "one evidence of my love to God is love to the sabbath day. It is the *best* day of the week to me. I am glad when it draws near; I feel the want of it before it comes. Another evidence is, mean thoughts of the world: my age exposes me to the contrary temptations: but *whom have I in heaven but thee?* and I would get above it. The promise-performing God has begun to perform that promise to me, (Romans vi. 14.) *Sin shall not have dominion.* Pride, that tympany of the soul, by the applications of the heavenly Physician, is begun to be cured, though but begun. Psalm ciii. 2. *Who healeth all thy diseases. Vain thoughts compass me about like bees.* I am stung with them. My pride appears in my thoughts, pleasing myself with my own sayings and doings. O that I could say as David, Ps. cxxxi. 1. *Lord, my heart is not haughty.*" She observes once after a sacrament, "I thought that the apostle's method was taken, *Let a man examine himself and so eat;* yet dull, lifeless, and unbelieving."

"March 28, 1689. I was very proud, given to pleasure, with the neglect of God; and it does find me out; for *they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercies.*"

She mentions her father's particular advice to her to look to *secret* duty. Keep up that whatever you do, nothing will prosper without it; all grace grows, as love to the word of God grows.

This collection of her experiences she drew up when she was about nineteen years old, but, I believe, never any one beside herself saw it, or knew a tittle of it till after her death. For the top of her ambition was to be accepted of that God who sees in secret. Any one that hath read these lines, which were the easy and natural product of her pen, and of a piece with her discourses, will say there is something more in them than is usually found in such tender years, and will wish she had been more large and copious in the account.

She wrote also her father's exposition of the Scriptures in the family very judiciously, and made use of them in her private reading of the Bible. She gave herself much to the reading of good books, yet not neglecting the useful employment of her sex and place. Mr. Clarke's last volume of Lives she read again and again with much pleasure, and was well versed in it: and ready, upon all occasions, to produce pertinent and profitable passages out of that and other good books for the edification of others: she was able, with the good householder, to bring out of her treasury things new and old. She made a large collection, in writing, of what she met with most remarkable in her reading.

How amiable and exemplary her deportment was in all relations, as a daughter, as a sister, as a friend, they who knew her can easily bear record: and, though it never appeared to the discouragement of the rest, yet it could not but be discerned that Mr. Henry had a special dear love for his little Nancy, and sometimes said she was the diamond in his ring.

In the twentieth year of her age she was married to Mr. John Hulton, a tradesman in Chester, April 26th, 1688; and she was equally yoked. Take the account of that turn of her life in her own words, in the continuation of the afore-mentioned papers:—

"After nineteen years' barrenness in the place where I first sprung up, God was pleased, by his providence, to put me into the married state, and transplant me into a new soil. It was an affair I thought of great weight, and I was much afraid of seeking great things for myself in this world therein. When I press it upon my conscience, I cannot but acknowledge that I did therein commit my way unto the Lord, and did lay myself before him as white paper, for him to write his will upon me; and accordingly, his providence brought it to a comfortable issue, after much distraction of mind about it."

April 21, 1688, (a few days before her marriage,) she thus writes:—"I did set myself before the Lord to repent of all the sins of my single state; and if sin were never bitter before, I think it was exceedingly bitter then, and, through grace, I did then renew my hold of God as mine."

Soon after this, she removed to Chester. "That morning," she writes, "reading alone, in course, (Exodus iii.) of Moses's objections against going on God's errand, I was much comforted by God's answer, v. 12. *Certainly I will be with thee.* Applying that word to myself was very refreshing. Some time before this, reading Genesis xxviii. concerning Jacob's vow, it affected me, and I then, with some seriousness, entered into a solemn promise, that if God would be with *me*, in that present way, and provide for me, and make the issue comfortable, that then he should be my God; creatures should not have the throne in my soul. I would be more watchful against sin, and be more diligent and careful in his service."

Some weeks after her settlement at Chester she thus writes, under the foregoing record of her solemn vow:—"Because deceit lies in generals, and because after particular foils by temptation my conscience reproaches me that it was for want of resolution, I now, in God's name, go forth resolving, not only in general to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of my life, but particularly, in the strength of Jesus Christ, I resolve against the following sins:—flesh-pleasing and inordinate appetites; passion and frowardness; drowsiness and weariness in the worship of God; despising others; thinking or speaking ill of any; self-

conceit and pride; a lying tongue; all injustice in the calling wherein God hath put me; discontent in the condition allotted for me.

"I do likewise, in the same strength, resolve upon the following duties:—self-denial; meekness; liveliness in duty; reproving when there is opportunity; humility, and low thoughts of myself; truth, equity, justice, and charity: in general, making conscience of all God's commands.

Thus she set out in her new condition, and how strictly she adhered to the rules she laid down was very evident, as far as could fall under the observation of others. Some time after, she thus writes:—"Because, through the necessity of my outward affairs, my secret duties are commonly limited and contracted more than formerly, I have been ready to fear that I have declined in grace, and left my first love. I am sensible of the prevalency of unbelief, and of God's withdrawings; but, though he slay me yet will I trust in him. I have this day promised seriously, to spend some time every day in converse with God. I see in a trade the shop must be constantly attended, though, perhaps, for some time no profits come in; so the trade of religion must still be followed, though there be not, for the present, any sensible comfort and benefit. In this place where God hath set me, he doth require of me,

"1. That I get much knowledge and grace, because I have means for getting them.

"2. That I be very humble, because my gifts are small, and my attainments poor, graces weak, and failings many.

"3. That I be ready for death, because I see many funerals. And because death at a distance did not affect me, it pleased God to bring it nigh me in the death of a near, and that a very dear, relation, viz. sister Henry, February 14, 1688-9. The quarrel God seemed to have with me therein was upon the account of relative sins, and the omission of relative duties; whereupon I endeavoured to repent of them, and renew my covenant in that matter. And because that providence did not do the work for which it was sent, shortly after, another dear friend whom I loved as my own soul, was suddenly taken away (Mrs. Bradbury); the circumstances of her death being such as I was near falling into myself, viz. child-bearing; it did much affect me with cares and thoughts about another world, which had been too little minded by me. After this providence, I was threatened by the illness of my dear mother; upon her recovery, my sense of the mercy obliged me to promise to be more freely willing to resign to the will of God another time; and surely there is all the reason in the world, when the great God condescends to grant my request, that I should say, His will be done. Sin hath much prevailed. Omissions witness against me, and a constant remissness in my walking. I cannot answer for one of a thousand; but—help is laid upon one that is mighty."

She became a mother, July 29, 1689, (but the child died in the birth,) on which providence she thus writes:—"A day never to be forgotten; wherein I felt the bitter fruits of the sin of my grandmother Eve; that part of her sentence being fully fulfilled, *I will greatly multiply thy sorrow. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth.* The peril and danger was much greater than ordinary; so that, as the Lord liveth, there was but a step between me and death. My flesh and heart were ready to fail, and friends ready to despair; but God became the strength of my heart and my portion; and I trust he will be so *for ever.* But, behold, what have these sheep done? The innocent I cannot say, but the less guilty, must die. O Adam, Adam! what hast thou done? My comforts are taken away before I had well received them. Was it all lost labour? Surely no; I have good hope that heaven is something fuller for my babe. I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me. My God is instead of all to me; and were he not mine, sure it were impossible to bear up without sinking under those pains I endured, but the mercy swallowed up the affliction, and rejoiced against judgment. I often promised to love him, and to live to him; and I do it once more."

From the consideration of this event, concerning her first child, she hath sometimes said, "What need mothers have to pray for their children before they are born!"

Her next remark is, April 26, 1690. "I sickened of the small-pox, and though in perilous circumstances, yet was wonderfully brought through them: when I had received the sentence of death within myself, surely the Lord was ready to save me; and the mercies, the sweet mercies which I experienced in the affliction, I shall never forget.

"I may truly say, with David, *Unless thy law had been my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction.* But God doth seem by his providence to call me to be heavenly minded; to be more humble; to take up with him as my happiness; to be less afraid of death; to abound always in the work of the Lord. Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of destruction, for thou hast cast all my sins behind my back." Isa. xxxviii. 17.

In this illness, when she was asked how she did, her usual answer was, "I shall be well."

June 29, 1691. "I received," she writes, "special mercy from God, in answer to prayer. He was to me a present help, and did not only spare, but multiply, and gave me a living son, or rather, lent him to me for a while: and I have resigned him and myself to the will and disposal of our heavenly Father. How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty! Zech. ix. 17. I look upon every sin, after such a mercy as this, to be more deeply aggra-

vated than before. My great unprofitableness under the means of grace, is that at the serious consideration of which my heart doth even melt, and my spirits sink; finding comfort in that Psalm, (ciii. 12.) *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed my transgressions from me;* I thought, with joy, if it were so good for me to have my transgressions removed as far as the east is from the west, how much better would it be when they shall be removed as far from me as hell is from heaven."

On a sacrament day, May 6, 1694, in which it seems she had more communion with God than ordinary, she thus writes: "Forget not ever, O my soul, the sight that thou hast had this day from Pisgah's mount of Canaan's land. What shall I render to the Lord? I have, at the Lord's table, seen my Redeemer as he was in his blood and sufferings; but shortly I hope to see him as he *is*, though not as I am. See to it then, O my soul, that thou purify thyself, even as he is pure."

May 5, 1695, she writes thus: "This last month past I have received great mercy from God in the recovery of both the children from the small-pox; the one brought into great peril, the other brought through imminent danger, by a fever which seized him about three weeks after the beginning of the small-pox. What shall I render to the Lord for his great benefits? He hath been trying me whether I could freely give up my children, which, I hope, I having done, he turned the scale and restored them to me. God having corrected me by the child's relapse, my own heart condemneth me for my own backslidings. Oh that now I might remember whence I am fallen, and repent and do my first works! I have been this day showing forth the Lord's death, and renewing my covenant with him: surely it is meet to be said unto God, 'I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.' Amen, Amen."

November 19, 1695. In her confinement, after the birth of a child that died when nine days old, she thus writes: "God hath of late been proving and trying me, to do me good in my latter end. I looked for peace, but beheld trouble. My house hot made to grow; but the Lord who gave, quickly took away again; adored be the name of the Lord. And now, what doth the Lord my God require? My greatest concern is to improve this providence. God hath (and so have I) been calling my sin to remembrance, that I may be humbled under his mighty hand, and cleave closer to him in love, dependence, and resolution; for even this is performed for me: and what have I to show now for my interest in him and relation to him? Is not my hope a groundless hope? I do not ground it upon myself and my own righteousness, but Jesus Christ is he, concerning whom I say, *Whom have I in heaven but thee?*"

March 1, 1696. "Dare not, my soul, to deny that thou hast this day met with thy God at his table. Silence, thou loud and clamorous unbelief. Never open thy mouth any more. God is willing to be mine, and who can say against it? For, if he will work, who can let it? Only remember, that having received Christ Jesus the Lord, I must walk in him."

Thus far goes her paper of experience, in which she seems to have given vent to her thoughts when they were more than usually enlarged. And if such as this was her converse with God, it will be of use to inquire what was her conversation in the world. Not to mention the common characters of all the saints, which appeared eminently in her, nor the careful discharge of the duties of her particular relation, there are some things which have been observed concerning her, which were peculiarly exemplary and instructive.

1. That though she was so constant in her secret worship, and took so much delight in her closet work, yet she ordered it with so much discretion, that it did not interfere with nor hinder her from any needful attendance upon her worldly affairs, in the house or shop. Every thing is beautiful in its season; and there is a way of abiding with God, and serving the Lord Christ in the particular calling wherein we are called, as well as in his immediate worship. The virtuous woman will look well to the ways of her household, and yet not neglect the ways of her heart.

2. That she was very industrious to promote the family worship in all the parts of it; contriving for it in its season, that nothing might put it out of time; calling to it; being ready to attend on it; and careful to prevent all disturbance in it. If inferior relations would thus do their part, it would be a great help to the master of the family in the discharge of his duty. In her husband's absence she carefully and constantly performed all the parts of family worship herself. It being their custom to pray together morning and evening, she frequently prayed with him. She prayed much for their children, and carefully instructed them in the things of God as they grew capable. Her tender care of two orphans, the relations of her husband, which the providence of God brought into their family, was very remarkable, especially her great concern for their spiritual welfare.

3. That she was very few of her words, not only in making of bargains, but in her converse, *swift to hear and slow to speak;* but when she did speak it was with wisdom, and to the purpose. She was like the still waters, which run deep but make no noise. One might observe in all her discourse, that she thought twice before she spoke once; and so prevented a deal of that guilt and grief which attend the multitude of words. Her speech was always with grace. She breathed forth a religious air in her common converse; and usually expressed herself in her converse with her friends in Scripture

language. The word of God dwelt richly in her, and, by the divine blessing on her great diligence in reading the Scriptures and other good books, (which was her daily practice,) she acquired a good stock of Scripture knowledge; out of which treasury she readily brought forth things new and old, which rendered her conversation both pleasing and profitable.

4. That she preserved an evenness and composure of spirit under all events; one should seldom or never see her ruffled or disturbed by any provocation, lifted up with any joy or cast down with any sorrow; but, whatever happened to weigh down one scale, her wisdom and grace suggested something to put in the other scale to keep the balance even. Upon the death of her father, an affliction that went so near her heart, how calmly did she apply those words of Thomas to his fellow-disciples when Lazarus was dead, *Let us go and die with him.*

5. That she was very cheerful in her converse, and was far from that sourness and melancholy which some good people indulge themselves in, to the reproach of their profession; she made it to *appear* that she found the ways of wisdom pleasantness.

6. She was very charitable to the poor, and stretched forth her hand to the needy. She was always very careful not to make the poor at her door stay long for their alms, for in that time, she would say, they might get another alms elsewhere. She loved to visit the godly poor, when they were sick, and discourse with them, and relieve them. She was one that devised liberal things, and sought opportunities of doing good.

7. On the Lord's day she commonly had her heart much enlarged in rejoicing and thanksgiving, and she used to refresh herself much on that day with singing of psalms alone at the time of vacancy from other duties.

8. She was very forward to promote works of piety and charity, and to stir up others thereto. Her zeal herein provoked many. She delighted in opportunities of showing kindness to others, and was very courteous in her behaviour towards all.

9. She was very frugal of her time, and was observed by those about her to be continually employed.

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## SOME SAVOURY USEFUL PASSAGES, GLEANED UP OUT OF SOME OF HER LETTERS TO HER RELATIONS AND FRIENDS.

To a gentlewoman, under some doubts about her interest in Christ, she thus writes:—"I know not what is better for a man when he is out of the way, and is convinced of it, than to turn back and get as fast as he can into the *right* way: if thou art persuaded thou art not yet in Christ, give up thyself to him quickly in a marriage covenant. The word is nigh thee to direct thee; the throne of grace is nigh thee, and to it thou mayst draw near for assistance. I believe there is nothing God is more willing to give than his Spirit."

Upon the occasion of a marriage in her father's house, she hath this observation in another letter: "She that is married careth for the things of the world. Indeed, her opportunities of *doing* good will be more than they were, but of *getting* good less. *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* I find, as to myself, that a little thing abates my zeal and flattens my spirit in duties, which makes me fear the snares of the world. It is an enemy to our souls and our graces, to our duties and to our comforts, to our holy living and to our comfortable dying."

She had a tender sense of sin, as appears by this passage in a letter to the same person: "Indeed, it is difficult to be sensible of sins we think small; they are like knots in a fine thread, or hair, hard to untie: greater sins, like knots in a rope. I am greatly afraid of open presumptuous sins, such as may break my peace as long as I live. I may fitly compare myself to a body full of ill humours: though a sore in one place is seemingly healed, yet it breaks out in another; so when I am better in one respect I am worse in another."

Her mean opinion of herself she expresses in another letter to the same person: "Should I go about to tell you how bad I am, it were more than I could do; surely I am ready to go out of love with myself every day: there is some shift to be made to flee from other things that molest, but not from one's self. Really, Madam, religion is the most amiable thing in the world. If I could be very good, and yet think myself bad, how well were it."

In another, she thus writes about meditation: "I confess I am too little acquainted with it, especially the practical part, which is the sweetest. As to what I have tasted, I cannot tell the one half of the sweetness of it, and many times I have found more of God therein than in prayer; before I can fix there is some preparation necessary, and many a chain of vain thoughts to grapple with, which do often prevail and rob me of all my meditating time. As to my helps in it, my God is he that worketh both to will and to do. What more unruly than the thoughts? it is very hard to govern them! 1. I find a fixed heart a great help; the contrary I find a great hinderance; now where shall we find this, but whence every good and perfect gift comes? 2. An heart like the treasury of the good householder, wherein are things laid up both new and old. There must be knowledge to furnish us with matter. It is easier to know what helps there are than to find ourselves holpen by them. Most of my meditations are con-

fused and torn; sometimes some attribute of God is the subject of them, as his wisdom, power, holiness; sometimes some sin, some scripture," &c.

To her eldest sister,* who was married, she thus wrote:—"I am so well acquainted with myself as to know I am very unfit for the condition thou art in, and hast so much comfort in; the conditions are as the persons are. I sadly fear displeasing God, or doing any thing which will wound conscience. I am ready to think there cannot but be more hinderances in our *great business* in that condition than in my present condition. Dost thou not find it so? If it be not for the glory of God, I hope something will be thrown in the way to hinder it: for, however it is, God is good. It is no small comfort to have infinite wisdom and power engaged for one's good."

To another dear friend:—"I fear thou hast too good an opinion of me, which makes my work more difficult to beat down myself. Be not guilty of blowing up that bladder which is so apt to fill of itself. I shall take it as a part of friendship if thou wilt chide, instruct, and counsel me. Put thyself in my case. Thus far I am determined, and no farther, namely, to be guided by infinite wisdom. I heard something suitable to-day from Psalm xxv. *He will teach sinners:* within that number I come, if not within the latter, *The meek will he guide.* Be thou a fervent intercessor for me at a throne of grace; and pray meet me there at six o'clock on Saturday night, if thou canst conveniently. This morning I met with a suitable promise, Isa. lviii. 11. *And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not:* for the fulfilling of which to me I have no desert to plead, but divine mercy, goodness, and faithfulness; and is not that sufficient? Who but a fool will be in want of any thing, when he may have it for asking? I cannot but reckon it one of the greatest of my earthly blessings, that I am the child of such a family, a branch of this vine: and have often acknowledged it as a great mercy, that as I was the youngest, so I thought the most likely to stay longest here; and who knows but I may? I desire to trust God, however it be: the seed of the upright shall be blessed. Though myself I think unworthy, yet I am come of parents that are in covenant; but this will not save me, unless there be a principle within; it is encouragement to think that the smoking flax shall not be quenched. Mr. Vines† observes, 'That Christ would not have them drowned whom he calls, *O ye of little faith,*' Matt. viii."

To the same bosom-friend she writes, "I have not taken the world for my portion, and I think I have been made willing to take up with little of it for my passage. In my father's house the lines are fallen unto me in a pleasant place, and though I never absolutely resolved against a removal from it, yet I cannot but have dreadful apprehensions concerning it; the proposal of it hath occasioned me many a troublesome thought, and is like to do more. I am passive: delay in some cases is dangerous, but here desirable. Rebekah's relations, Gen. xxiv. 55. said, *Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at least ten.* But I was pleased to find it in the margin, a full year, or ten months. Sure that is a quiet and desirable world, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage: of what little avail will it be there whether we were here single or married! My desire is to depart, and be with Christ, which I am sure is best of all. Dost thou see the providence of God going before me? A stander-by may see more than a person concerned. It is very comfortable to have that to plead which Jacob had when in trouble, Gen. xxxii. 9. *The Lord which saidst unto me, Return.* The Urim and Thummim is now abolished, we must expect direction in an ordinary way: who hath known the mind of the Lord? Certainly this is his mind, that we should live to his glory; this is *his* will, even our sanctification, and it *should* be ours."

To the same gentlewoman, her dear bosom-friend, she thus expresses herself before she was married:—

"Thou art writ upon my heart in capitals easy to be read, as those that converse with me may see; thou hast given me the right hand of fellowship in holy ordinances, but hadst thou seen through me, surely thou wouldst not have suffered me to sit so nigh thee; was there ever such a mispender of time, such a trifler away of opportunities, as I am? When thou thinkest well of me, thou seest me not in my own clothes. I am much afraid of getting hurt by the good opinion thou hast of me. Thou seest in my book the fulfilment of the Scriptures, Isaiah xliv. 5. O that thou couldst see in my life the fulfilling of my own engagements! It is easier to vow than to pay, but it is great encouragement to think that God is a covenant friend. He is not so to every one. Who are we that God should take us into covenant with himself? It is not because he hath need of us, but because we have need of him. And must covenant people walk as other Gentiles? Surely no!"

Soon after her marriage she wrote thus:—

"I scarce know yet where I am, but this I know, that I am under the care of my heavenly Father. It is now come to the trial, more than ever, whether I make conscience of duty or no, I mean my *secret* duty. When I had larger opportunities for it, I could not for shame but, at least, seem to improve them, though, alas, what lost time was there in the closet which others thought not so! It cannot but be bitter now. Yet I would not for something have

* Mrs. Savage.

† A learned and excellent divine, who died A. D. 1655. See Clarke's Lives, fol. p. 48. and Brook's Lives of the Puritans, vol. iii. p. 230.

all undone that hath been done there; but I wish it had been done *better*. Blessed be God for the Redeemer that is come to Sion to turn away ungodliness from Jacob; as it is quoted, Romans ii. 26. though it is otherwise, Isaiah lii. 9. My thoughts are very much of dear parents, and brothers and sisters; but there is danger lest, if I think too much, I should be discontent with my present condition, which is best for me. I have seen a little more of the world than I had seen a little while ago, and, truly, there is nothing in it which affords solid comfort and satisfaction to the soul. One sight, by faith, of the lowliness of Jesus Christ, is enough to make one out of love with every thing else in comparison of him."

Upon the death of Mrs. Bradburne,* she thus wrote to a dear friend:—"As was her way, such was her end, even peace, submission to the will of God, rejoicing in Christ Jesus; expressed in such language as this,—'None but Christ, none but Christ, he is my all in all.' Thus did she go triumphantly to heaven. I shall never forget her whom I so dearly loved; her death made some impression upon this rocky heart of mine. If this be done to the green tree, what shall be done to the dry? Sure it should make me think more of heaven. We used to fancy to ourselves how our friends and acquaintance, that are at a distance from us in the world, do live; though we never saw how, yet, from what we have heard, we imagine what they do; what company they have, what privileges, &c. And what a happy state do I imagine the soul of my dear friend to be in, whose face always shone, and yet was covered with a veil of humility. It is some comfort to me, that as I loved and delighted in her company here, so I shall enjoy it refined for ever. Though friends fail, yet God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. As to myself, I might be useful in the world if I had a heart according to the price in my hand. Indeed I have lived at ease in Sion, as it speaks mercy; I wish it might not be said so of me, as it speaks a sinful frame. I have been ready to say, My mountain stands strong, I shall never be moved; when it is but God's hiding of his face, and I shall be troubled. When friends are gone, the sting of affliction lies in the reflection upon my misimprovement of them whilst with them. Let us therefore redeem the time, because the days are evil. The world is certainly nothing, and nothingness is all that is in it. Continue to pray for me for all things that may be suitable: spiritual mercies cannot be unsuitable. I pray, forget not in all your enjoyments to enjoy God as the gladness of your joy; for what is all without him but vanity and vexation? Even ordinances themselves are dry and sapless unless he fills them, though there is the likeliest place to find him: more *of* God, but not more *than* God, we should seek for. It is very comfortable, methinks, when with new acquaintance we meet with those that are travelling in the same road with us, and aiming at the same ultimate end.

It is sure God hath his remnant every where, and heaven will not want inhabitants, though such unworthy wretches as I come short through unbelief. You are singing of mercy and judgment, we are mixed; therefore providences are so towards us in this world, a gleam of peace to fit us for a brunt of trouble, that we may not settle upon our lees. Where you are you learned to know what David complained of, when he sojourned in Meshech, and dwelt in the tents of Kedar. In such a place there is good to be *done* where there is none to be *gotten:* and there is this advantage to it, that by doing good we get good; by kindling others our own hearts will burn within us, and who knows whether you may be cast there for such an occasion as this?"

To another of her sisters, upon the death of her sister Henry, in the year 1689, she wrote thus:—"There were few families so little acquainted with the scourges of divine Providence as ours was; but now the days of visitation are come, and coming more and more. These are teaching providences; should we not learn obedience by them, passive obedience, lest the next furnace we are cast into be seven times hotter? It would, I think, be a greater affliction to have such relations as are with us our grief and burthen, whilst with us, than it is to have those that were our comfort taken from us. We must consider that God hath a greater interest in all our creature comforts than we have; they are but lent us, and he may call them when he hath occasion for them; and who are we that we should contend with him?"

To her sister in the country:—"I rejoice to hear of the continuance of your welfare; the same that is good is still doing us good, and loading us with his benefits; we must not expect that our health and prosperity should always last. Shall we receive good and not evil also, forasmuch as we do evil and not good? If we could learn this good lesson in the enjoyment of our creature comforts, to enjoy God in all, and in the want of them, to enjoy *all* in God, it would thereby appear that we lived by faith. It is difficult to learn how to want, and it is no less so to learn how to abound." In a time of affliction she thus writes:—"'Tis pity that prosperity should do us hurt, for no affliction for the present seems joyous, but grievous; and if the heart had been duly humbled by constant mortification, and inured to the cross, these outward afflictions would not have been so hard to bear."

* Memoirs of Mrs. Savage, p. 21.

Upon her recovery from the small-pox she writes. —"I write to let you know that I am going from strength to strength through the divine goodness; yet reprieved, because not ready for heaven. Help me to praise God for sustaining and delivering mercy, and also to pray that I might greatly profit by this visitation, that my God may not complain that yet I have not returned unto him. I cannot but acknowledge with thankfulness the interests I have in the love and prayers of good people here, though unworthy of it."

At a time of public trouble, she writes:—"It is a mercy there are not fears within, as well as fightings without; though, truly considered, public calamities were worse than personal, yet, commonly, personal do more affect;—when the sword doth not depart from the house, as in David's case. It is an excellent thing to have a God to trust to, especially an interest in Him in whose hands our times are; not only events themselves, but the *seasons* of them. I find nothing more prejudicial to me than distrust, both in reference to the concerns of the soul, and of the body also. I hope to see you shortly, but wives must be *housewives*, and sometimes *shopwives*, as I know who. I find it hard to turn into a closet. Let not *thy* farm, nor *my* merchandize, be hinderances to us in the way to heaven. The visiting of several sick and afflicted friends takes up a great part of our evening time now: we must not expect to be ourselves exempted from chastisement; the best we can expect is to have them from a Father—in measure and in mercy. There is no greater or better ground of hope than the truth and faithfulness of God, for that cannot fail; all the question is, Whether we can lay claim to the promises? He is in a sad case that must be miserable if the word of God be true, and he is as happy that must be so if the God of truth be true. Who shall separate us from the love of God? The children of Israel, in their march towards Canaan, removed out of the wilderness of Paran: in the world we go out of one wilderness into another, but the *Canaan* is before us. I am now at Elim, where there are twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees; led into green pastures and fed beside the still waters. The only trouble is my unprofitableness, barrenness, leanness, non-proficiency. It is easier to complain than to amend. I know you rejoice with us when we rejoice: that you may do so, you must know how it is with us;—as yet, health and peace are continued; the nursery prospers, and the little ones; angels watch over us continually; the tediousness of nursing we owe to sin; that which sweetens it is the hope that some of our children may glorify God in the world."

And in another:—"The nurseries continue to prosper, thanks be to Him who comforteth us as one whom his mother comforteth. I am glad to hear you have this breathing-time. Our heavenly Father is, we see, slow to afflict, but swift to show mercy; long in forbearing, not long in contending. If it be that he is preparing to strike, we should prepare to be stricken: what! shall we receive good, and not evil? Faith and patience are the two great bearing graces which are necessary in a time of peril. Base distrust is a sin that doth most easily beset me, either of God's power or will; neither of which can easily be questioned; for is any thing too hard for God?—or is his mercy clean gone? No, no; O pray for more faith! I cannot but pity your frequent sabbaths spent at home, while we have the manna at our tent-door; but remember that the careful Father, if there be no school near, will teach his child at home, rather than he should not learn; so will the blessed Spirit, the great Instructor, do the work himself, teaching his people to profit; and, if he doth it, it will be *well* done; for assuredly, if he be not filling the ordinances, they are but empty breasts; if he pass by and do not speak, there is no meeting. O that we had more of God! not more than God, but more of him. Those same things you beg for yourself, beg for me, especially for faith. I have reason to believe (as Mr. Baxter said to his friends) that God will sooner hear your prayers than mine. In his funeral sermon, with the account of his death, his humility and self-denial appear admirable, and make me think of that Scripture, *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?* If he did nothing to boast of, sure I have a great deal to *mourn* over."

To her sister in the country, with common tidings and business, she intermixeth very pertinently such lines as these:—"We need sometimes to be in heaviness, we must look for it: herein is the heart deceitful,—that we think we trust in God; but when creatures fail, we find by our failing, that we trusted in *them:* you will not want spiritual supplies while God is all-sufficient."

"To render good for good is no more than the publicans do; yet, alas! how much *evil* do we render for good to him that is good, and doth good!"

"Pray, pray that we may be found of God in peace, without spot, and blameless. The time is short, and therefore every opportunity ought to be taken hold of for improving relations, both near and far off, that that great talent of society may not be buried in a napkin."

"I have less thinking time here than you have in the country. A solitary life I mightily prized formerly, but the great and wise God did not see it good for me: my temper inclined me to it, but now I can envy the outward condition of none."

"You would not envy my bare enjoyment of gospel privileges if you knew how unprofitable I am under them; it is easier to spend a deal of time in the external performance of holy duties in the old road, than to improve a little time seriously and profitably

therein. If you knew my sad declinings, especially my great remissness in keeping my heart, you would pity me rather than flatter me. Pride is a weed that, in the soil of my heart, needs no watering."

"Poor sister Henry, upon the death of the child, is sitting alone and keeping silence. The consideration of her giving it up to God in baptism, when she was asked by my father whether she could freely do it, hath had influence upon her submission. Let us in a day of prosperity be joyful, and think of a day of adversity."

"Is it any wonder that dying creatures die?"

"In this vale of tears we are full of complaints. It is a bad sign that former afflictions have not done their work, in that he is further testifying against me by the sickness of the children; when the staff and the rod will not do, the cart-wheel and the thrashing instrument are used by him, who is *wonderful in counsel and excellent in working*, Isa. xxviii. 27—29. I need not request your prayers, mostly for divine teachings, that they may accompany divine chastenings. They are bitter things when an interest in covenant love is not clear, but *He knows the way that I take: when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.* Let not the Almighty put me in the furnace and leave me there."

At another time:—"It is a mercy to have such comfortable homes as we have; such relations, so much health. O, how short do we come of the law of thankfulness; every one of God's mercies, even the least, calls for more praise and thanks than we return for them in general: to reflect upon my own unthankfulness may make me humble. I desire your prayers, as you have mine, for mercy and grace. This is a vain world we live in; time slips while I hold my hand; how busy, how diligent should we be; all will be little enough when we come to die! I heartily sympathize with you in the tediousness of your nursery, but take heed of complaining as Rebekah;—'If it be so, why am I thus?'—why is this child of promise so troublesome? It comforts me as to nursing inconveniences, that bringing up of children, lodging strangers, and washing the saints' feet, are put together as *good works*, 1 Tim. v. 10. Let not evil tidings remove your fixed heart; though when we looked for peace, behold trouble, did not we agree for this—if need be, for a season to be willing to be in heaviness? Our sympathizing with each other is a little help, but, alas! miserable comforters are we. I have sometimes been dejected in remembrance of former zeal, forwardness, and fervency in the good way, from which I fear I have declined; upon which, once calling to mind that Scripture did comfort, (Eccl. vii. 10.) *Say not thou that the former days were better than these.* O, that blessed book of God hath all in it I want! let us study it more. What calamities hath sin brought upon us, and yet *itself* we should count a thousand times worse. It is easy to reckon up afflictions, but my sins and God's mercies are numberless, one of which is the interest we have in the pity and prayers of our dear friends. I may hope that all these things are performed for me, and may gather hence, that seeing the threatening part of the covenant is feelingly made good in afflictions, the promising part (Ps. lxxxix. 30, &c.) will also: the same truth is engaged for *both*. I rejoice to hear of your children's recovery: are we like the one leper, who returned to give thanks, or like the nine? Times of trial are times of gaining experience, for patience works experience. We usually pray often for the preventing the evils we fear, but seldom thanking serves; sure the mercy, the God of the mercy, deserves as many *praises* as prayers. I find worldly cares rightly compared to thorns, but *one thing is needful.* My little girl is learning to walk, and represents the weakness of the heart after it falls into sin. It fears, faints, and flags. The heart's deceitfulness is desperate: when in prosperity, I have thought if I were in affliction I should be very humble and contrite under God's hand; when in affliction,—O, if I were delivered I should and would be very thankful and obedient! but it is neither so nor so; never may it be trusted in again."

Upon the death of her little one, at nine days old, November, 1695, she thus writes:—"It is easier to answer you to your satisfaction, than to answer the call of divine Providence, which sounds louder and louder; it requires more time than I now have to tell you my need of chastisements, and God's wisdom and goodness in choosing this rod to do it with. My fruit towards him hath been untimely; the breasts of the promises have run waste; I have not drawn from them and been satisfied. It brings to my remembrance, as my own sin, so your affliction;—from the same hand, of the same kind, with the same design of good to us. O, that I could improve my present retirement in considering what the Lord my God requires of me! We should learn this by all our disappointments, not to boast of to-morrow, for we know not what a day may bring forth. It is no hard usage that I should be diminished whilst others are increased; for do not all things come alike to all? Nay, as many as our heavenly Father *loveth* he rebukes and chastens, and though it be a mighty hand, and therefore good reason why I should humble myself under it, yet it is the hand of a *Father*, which, whilst it is on to afflict, is under to support; and death itself shall not separate us from the love which we have in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory for ever. When I have been a few days from home, I begin to think myself a wanderer from my place, as a bird that wanders from her nest. I wish I do not settle on the lees, being so much a stranger to that sojourning state which Abraham was

in in the land of promise. We are changing our servants; all changes are troublesome; this world, therefore, is a troublesome world, because so full of changes: sufficient to every day is the evil thereof."

A letter which she wrote to one of whom she heard something scandalous, taking care it should not be known from whom it came, may be inserted here.

"Mr. ———

"To ease myself, and, if it might be, to do you good, is my design in writing this. I having joined with you in gospel ordinances, cannot hear of your fall without fear and trembling. Very loth I was to believe it; speak of it I may not, 'tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon;' but first to yourself, whom I cannot expect to inform of that which you know not, but remind you of that you do know, that the prevailing love of God in the heart will no way consist with the love and liking of any sin. Whoever they be that name the name of Christ and do not depart from iniquity, I am sure their profession will carry them but a little way, at farthest but to heaven's gates: dissembled piety is double iniquity, and shall receive greater damnation. I do wonder how, and with what face, any one can appear before God, among his people, in solemn ordinances, that is yet resolved to go on in sin. Consider, you may deceive us that join with you, but not him that searcheth the heart, and knows what is in man. Is your spot the spot of God's children? It is true David fell foully, and I fear some have encouraged themselves in sin by his example; but let them consider it was once, in an hour of temptation, and it cost him dear. He came home by weeping cross, and I believe he would not for his kingdom have repeated the sin: after which he had scarce a good day. Wherefore is his sad fall recorded, but that all people may take heed of *entering* into temptation, and watch and pray that they may not? Is it a light matter that religion is so much reflected on? By your means the blessed name of Jesus Christ suffers. People say, Yea, they are all alike; whereas, God knows, as you have opened the mouth of the wicked, you have saddened the hearts of the godly, who mourn in secret for your miscarriages. May I advise you, nay, doth not the word of God command you, to remember whence you are fallen, and to repent; and let your repentance be public, as your fall hath been. There is yet hope if you return, but none if you go on: there is a fountain opened for poor sinners, to wash from sin and from uncleanness, but then you must look up to him whom you have pierced, and *mourn*. I know not what frame you are in, but God knows. This comes from the true love I bear to your soul, and the interest of religion, which greatly suffers: offences do come, and will come, but woe to them by whom they come! Can there be baser ingratitude than to make him suffer *by* us who suffered so much *for* us? Do you thus requite the Lord? Dare any come to the table of the Lord for a cloak to vile practices? O profound madness! Is the holy Jesus a pattern of sin? Is Christianity a bare name? No, I will never believe it! What shall I say? Return unto the Lord, for you have fallen into iniquity: take with you these words, and say, *Take away all iniquity*, Hosea xiv. 2. I shall cease speaking to you, but not praying for you, who am

"Your soul's friend."

When sickness had long been in the family (and breach upon breach made) of a near neighbour and relation, she thus writes:—"The hand of God is going out against us; his providence shows his controversy to be great and long, and something more than ordinary. Judgments begin with us, the distemper spreads, and where it may end we know not; the dregs of the cup may yet be reserved for ourselves: I cannot say but I have had fair warning, and yet I have not got above the fears of death, that king of terrors. It is a great attainment: I can think of nothing future with so much certainty as dying; that *great* work, *once to die*."

When her children had the small-pox she writes:—"They and we are in good hands; it is a great mercy we are not singled out for some uncommon and *extraordinary* judgment, but visited with the same that many are tried with. I hope that you will entreat for us that this affliction may not be lost."

Writing the news of one who died suddenly, she added,—"What need have we to be ready to die at very short warning! Desire sister Radford, though she be abroad from her family, yet being there where she is *useful*, not to be too thoughtful of home, as I myself have sometimes been, when I found afterwards that I was not so much missed, as through my pride, and minding my own things, I thought I was."

After the death of her sister Radford she thus wrote to her sister Savage:—"The good tidings we have had of your safe delivery, (which was the next day after her sister Radford's death,) and that God was to you a present help, and both root and branch are spared, mixeth our song of judgment with mercy, and God hath set the one over against the other. We have been continued together many years, and after the crown fell from our head,* God let us alone another year also, but now the knot is broken. O for a sense of divine displeasure in this dispensation, and wisdom to spell out the meaning thereof! *for all this his anger is not turned away, but*

* An allusion to her father's death.

*his hand is stretched out still.* Dear sister Tylston* is very weak. We want our Aaron, the priest of the family, who would have stood between the living and the dead, that the plague might be stayed. God is angry, and yet I am not humbled as I should be under the mighty hand of God; and a mighty hand indeed it is. O, pray for me that I may be more so! I find there is no putting off the great work of closing with Christ till sickness and death come, for that is a very unfit time. And when it is done I see it is not easy then to have the comfort of it."

And in another:—"This is a loud-speaking controversy, and where it will end God only knows; but he is no less wise and good than ever he was, however it is. This shall afterwards yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Pray, pray hold up the hands and the heart, and you may do more than I."

And a little after:—"That you may know the better how to direct your prayers and praises, this comes to acquaint you that we are not consumed, and it is of the Lord's mercies it is so. The Lord will perfect that which concerns us; and what is that but our eternal happiness mostly? if that be sure, all is well. We have our infirmities, and is this our rest? If concerning this life only we had had hope, it had not been much worth."

When she had not occasion given her by providences to write such lines as these to her friends and relations, then she would fill her letters (and abundance of them are so filled) with the heads of sermons she had heard last, giving a concise account of the substance of them, and especially what in them did most affect her, and do her good. This practice would never leave us unfurnished with matter for pious and profitable letters, and might help very much to spread the savour of the knowledge of Christ.

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## A CATALOGUE OF SINS FOR HELP IN THE CONFESSION OF SIN.

"Who can understand his errors?"

ORIGINAL corruption; actual transgressions; sins of ignorance; sins against knowledge; sins in infancy, childhood, youth, and riper age; sins in the single state; sins in the married state; sins in unregeneracy; backslidings; sins against God, my neighbour, my own soul. More particularly,

Ignorance of God, aggravated by the enjoyment of the means of knowledge; atheism, questioning his being or providence; hard thoughts of God, forgetfulness of him; sins against the first commandment, which requires to know, love, and believe in God, to fear him, and trust in him; giving that glory to any other which is due to him alone, in reference to God's worship, natural or revealed; neglect of prayer and praise; negligences in them; lothness to be beholden to God for any thing; ascribing the glory of deliverances to somewhat else, not to God.

Drowsiness; vain thoughts in prayer; sins in reference to God's Word; not hearing or reading it with attention, reverence, seriousness, but slightly and cursorily. Sabbath sins; want of preparation for it; slothfulness on that day; omission of sabbath duties; doing my own works; vain thoughts; weariness of the sabbath. Sacrament sins; baptismal covenant oft renewed, but forgotten, not improved. Covenants against particular sins, to particular duties broken, especially as to the spending of some time daily in converse with God, by meditation; neglect of that great duty, both solemn and occasional, and of daily self-examination; backslidings as to this from wonted care. Slovenly performance of closet work; taking the name of God in vain; spiritual pride and ostentation in religious duties; pride in apparel, in words, in thoughts, self-conceit, self-love; flesh-pleasing, gratifying inordinate appetites, the body fed, the soul starved; excess in food, sleep, recreations; God is not in all my thoughts, lying down and rising up; my aims every morning not actually set right at God's glory; the great gospel laws of repentance and faith broken; time, precious time, mispent; time of youth not improved; love of ease and pleasure; disobedience to governors; despising others better than myself; doing that which was good to be seen of men; no relation filled up with duty; many that I might have done good to dead and gone; others that I might have got good by; the opportunity past, sermons lost; reproofs lost and forgotten; anger and bitterness; unchaste thoughts or affections; abuse of lawful things; loving, and overloving; doing any wrong to any person, whether knowingly or ignorantly; uncharitableness; giving grudgingly; not devising liberal things; lying through heedlessness; impatience of reproof; slandering, or reporting of slanders; speaking evil of others; hearing evil spoken with delight; discontent; covetousness; love of this present world, appearing in worldly thoughts; many, constant, welcome; envying, and inordinate affections; neglect of reproving and watching over others; sinful bashfulness; little grief for others' sins; sin sits light; love of Christ little thought of; signal mercies ill-requited for; afflictions not improved; brought low, raised up again, yet not amended; no attainments made in grace answerable to the means I enjoy; great carnality; oppositions to the Spirit's motions of late and heretofore; prevailing dejections and despondencies of spirit. *God be merciful to me a sinner.*

* Catharine, the wife of John Tylston, M. D.

## HEADS OF MERCIES FOR HELP IN THANKSGIVING.

### *Common Mercies.*

A BEING, and that rational; mercies of my conception, birth, nursing, infancy, rational faculties, natural understanding, limbs and senses, preservation in the cradle, at the breast, sustenance, clothes, food, not only for necessity, but for delight; parents continued; other relations provided to take up before they forsook; mercies at school; a capacity to learn, a memory able to retain truths; continuance almost twenty-one years in the world; divine patience exercised; scarce a day's sickness in all this time, as I remember; daily bread; varieties; drink hath not been tears. Much comfort in the single estate, in the married estate; suitableness in relations; extraordinary deliverance when in the valley of the shadow of death, July 28, 1689.

### *Less common Mercies.*

Godly education; daily instructions; special means for getting of knowledge; wise and seasonable reproofs; holy ordinances duly administered; admitted to the Lord's supper about fifteen years old; the example of godly parents; line upon line; Sabbath; some measure of knowledge.

### *Special Mercies.*

Election from eternity; free, effectual calling betimes in youth; strivings of the Spirit; checks of conscience; admonitions; quickenings from the Word; strength vouchsafed to perform duties; victory over temptations; comfort in sorrow; preventing mercies; taught to pray; answers to prayers for relations in working good for them.

### *Family Mercies.*

The house preserved from fire when begun very near, June, 1690; the family begun to be built up; children preserved from the perils of infancy. Two of my near relations' children taken off quickly by death; mine, of the same age, spared. March 27, 1693.—One child of a dear friend burnt to death; another neighbour's child drowned lately, yet mine preserved; one of the children preserved from a dangerous fall down a pair of stairs into the street; the recovery of both of them from the small-pox, May, 1695. January, 1695-6.—Both recovered from a malignant fever when they had been given up; at the same time two servants brought low by it, yet raised up. Ourselves preserved from the same distemper when two dear relations, mother and daughter, fell by it: wonder of mercy not to be forgotten.

### *National mercies.*

Great plenty; no famine; deliverance from the French fleet at sea, 1692, and victory over them, the wind turning for us; London delivered from the earthquake the same year when some kingdoms have been overturned and ruined by them.

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## SOME ACCOUNT OF HER LAST SICKNESS.

SHE was at public ordinances both morning and evening on the Lord's day, August 29: she had been with her relations, who were ill the day before, and that day also. Though the distemper had seized her a day before, yet she kept it to herself, as loth to be taken off by it from her work and duty. But that night it appeared that she was under the violent assault of a high fever, the alarm of which she received with her usual evenness and composure of spirit; and though she seemed from her first arrest to have received the sentence of death within herself, yet she was not at all disturbed at it, but spake of her circumstances with much cheerfulness. She was exceedingly afflicted with pain in her head, which quite deprived her of rest, and sleep departed from her eyes.

On Monday she sat up most of the day, spoke of her spiritual state with great humility and self-diffidence, repenting of sin, yet rejoicing in Christ Jesus: she said she was afraid of saying too much of her hope and comfort, because the heart is deceitful.

All that week she continued worse, (notwithstanding all means used,) but kept in a very patient, submissive, heavenly frame. When asked how she did, she answered, "Better than I deserve." Often said, "I know whom I have trusted." She desired to have the beginning of Isaiah xliii. read and opened to her; that Scripture which Mr. Bilney the martyr supported himself with,—*When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee.* She desired pardon for her omissions in the duty of her relations. The following sentences she uttered:

"I am not weary of living, but I am weary of sinning: I would live *as* Christ lives, and *where* Christ lives, and that I am sure will be *heaven.*"

"There are many passages in the Psalms not so proper for us but at such a time as this; as that, *My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.*"

"Let none think the worse of religion, nor of our family worship, for the afflictions that are in our families, nor have a hard thought of God, for however it be, yet *God is good.*"

When her pain and extremity were great, she said, "I know the great God can do me no wrong: who would desire to go so many steps back which

must some time or other be gone over again, when now I have but one stile more and I shall be at home?"

"I have hope in my death, for Christ hath said, *Because I live, ye shall live also.*"

"I have distrusted God, and am ashamed of it, for God is truth."

"Now for a promise."

"I hope this is no surprise."

"You are miserable comforters, but Jesus Christ is my abiding portion."

"I shall now be gathered to my people, and I have loved those that are godly, both poor and rich."

"Blessed be God for the Scriptures now."

Towards Saturday night she grew delirious; yet even then it was evident her heart was upon nothing so much as God, and the things of her soul; speaking often with a smiling cheerful countenance of psalms of praise and hymns of joy.

While she was under this disturbance she often recollected herself with this word,—"Here is nothing but Tahu and Bohu, (referring to Genesis i. 2.) confusion and emptiness, but it will not be so long."

After eight days' conflict with her distemper, on Monday, September 6, 1697, between the hours of seven and eight in the morning, she fell asleep in the Lord.

She was buried September 8, in St. Bridget's church, attended to the grave with abundance of true mourners, with whom her memory is and will be very precious.

Mr. Samuel Lawrence* preached her funeral sermon that evening at her brother's meeting-place, on Job vii. 16. *I would not live always.*

* See an account of this excellent divine in this volume.

# A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND DEATH

OF

# DOCTOR JOHN TYLSTON.

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He was born at Whitchurch in Shropshire, March 15th, 1663-4. His father was Mr. John Tylston, of Fair Oak in Staffordshire, a very pious man, and of exemplary conversation, especially for a holy contempt of the world, and the things of it, which he dealt in with a manifest indifferency. I would not mention so trifling a thing as the coat of arms of his family, but that the Doctor sometimes observed with pleasure, that it was the same with that which archbishop Tillotson gave, for whom he had so great a veneration. His mother was Mrs. Hannah Weld, of Rushton in Cheshire, who was likewise a very serious, humble Christian. Under his religious parents he was carefully brought up in the fear of God, and discovered early inclinations both to piety and learning. His father died, March 13th, 1683-4, his mother, April, 1688. He often blessed God for his religious parents, and spoke of them with much respect. His father did not design him for a scholar, being his eldest son; nor did he encourage his inclinations to learning, till he saw him so strongly addicted to it, that to divert him to any thing else, would have been to put a force and hardship upon him, too great for such a kind father to put upon so good a child. He entered upon learning at Whitchurch school, afterward made considerable progress in it at Newcastle, and for some time at Salop; but Mr. Edwards, master at Newport school, put the last hand to his school learning, and gave it some very happy strokes. To speak of his industry at school, and great application, is needless, since that is supposed in such as afterwards become eminent, for the time lost at school is seldom recovered; nor are those likely to make a good day's journey that let slip the morning.

After he left Newport school, he spent some time with two or three young men in the family, and under the tuition, of the Rev. Mr. Malden, at Alkington near Whitchurch, till it pleased God to take their master from their head, by death, May 21st, 1681. Here he attained to such perfection in the Greek and Hebrew, as made both those languages very familiar to him; and the half year he spent in them with Mr. Malden (for he had gone in them as far as boys ordinarily do in schools) he often reflected upon with satisfaction. The Hebrew language, though not serviceable to him in his profession, yet he carefully retained, by using his Hebrew Bible in his attendance on the public reading and expounding of the Scriptures.

In his earnest pursuit after learning, his affections and attendances to the exercises of piety were not less vigorous. He learnt betimes to write the sermons he heard in short-hand, and many of them he took pains to write at large, for the benefit of his friends. Soon after the death of Mr. Malden, by the advice of his near kinsman, and very dear friend, Mr. John Benion, Vicar of Malmsbury, he went to Oxford, and was admitted in Trinity College: his tutor was the learned Mr. Thomas Sykes, now Dr. Sykes, the Rev. Margaret's Professor of Divinity in that University. He was soon taken notice of and countenanced by the Rev. Dr. Bathurst, President of that college, who directed him in his studies. Here he so well approved himself for diligence and sobriety, that his worthy tutor, many years after, thus expresseth himself concerning him; "that he never had more reason to be pleased with the share he had in any man's education, than in his." When he was about Bachelor's standing, though he had very much applied himself to the study of divinity and the Scriptures, yet his inclinations led him to the study of physic, which he had laid a good foundation for, by his improvements in Natural Philosophy, *nam ubi definit physicus ibi incipit medicus.* Pursuant to this resolve, after he had for some time

directed his reading into this channel, in the year 1684 he removed to London, where he applied himself very closely to that study under the direction of that eminent physician, the honour of his profession, Dr. Blackmore, now Sir Richard Blackmore. After some time the learned Dr. Sydenham, (to whose ingenuity the faculty is thought to owe a great deal of its modern improvement,) hearing of him and of his character, sent for him, and was so well pleased with him, that he took him into his house, and gave him all the advantages imaginable, of acquainting him with the best methods of practice. Read what he himself had occasion to write concerning these happy instruments of his learning, in a letter to a friend, not long before he died.

"I have ever looked upon my obligations to those to whom my education was committed as inexpressibly great, and beyond all possibility of return. My tutor, the Rev. Dr. Sykes, was always to me as a father, and as such I still love and honour him. I love the very name of Sir Richard Blackmore, who first encouraged me to the study of physic, gave me the first invitation to London, recommended me to several good friendships there, took care of me in the small-pox, put me in a way of acquainting me with the city practice, and honoured me with the freedom of his own most ingenious and instructive conversation, as well as the use of his library. As for the great Dr. Sydenham, who received me into his house, carried me with him to his patients, led me into the mysteries of the faculty, and with a most generous freedom, and perpetual expressions, both verbal and real, of a true affection, treated me not only as a son, and disciple, but as a friend and companion, interesting himself with a paternal kindness in all my concerns: I cannot think of him otherwise than as a father, a friend, and benefactor; and as such his memory must ever be sacred to me. He often told me, that if it were possible for him to get loose from his engagements at London, he could gladly come and spend the remainder of his days with me in the country. All this was the effect of his own generous temper of mind; for which way could I either desire such a degree of friendship, or make any suitable returns?"

It was a very great kindness which Dr. Sydenham retained for him while he lived. Thus he expresseth himself concerning him, in one of his letters: "I do assure you, upon the word of an old man, I have a very entire love for you, and if it lay in my power, I should be more glad to do you service, than any one in the world, next my own children." Such an interest he had in the affections of that ingenious man, who in his last sickness gave him this character, that he was the most grateful man in the world. Those who knew any thing of Dr. Sydenham's principles of religion, ought to know likewise, that Dr. Tylston was his disciple in physic, but far from being so in divinity. Dr. Sydenham taught him, that the study of physic was not the framing of a curious hypothesis, and being able to support and contend for it; but learning by experience, and the observations of others in practice, how to cure diseases by assisting nature in its struggles with them. Every one knows how far to seek a lawyer would be in his profession, that should spend many years in reading books, and descanting upon them, and never attend the courts, nor acquaint himself with the methods of practice; and a physician that would take the same course, would be no less at a loss in his profession. It is ill trusting a guide that knows no more of the road but what he hath learned by the map.

The Doctor was soon aware of the quickness and ingenuity of his pupil, which made him very free in communicating to him the arcana of his practice; so that in a few months he became master of that treasure of observations, which that great man by many years large practice had gathered. This made his way at the first setting out very plain, and enabled him to proceed with very great assurances; which was a mighty advantage to one, whose natural temper was very far from being confident and daring, and who never knew how to *boast of a false gift*, as the wise man expresseth it, Prov. xxviii. 14. nor to pretend to that knowledge, which certainly he had not.

In the beginning of the year 1687, by the advice of Dr. Sydenham, in company with the Doctor's son, he took a journey to the university of Aberdeen, in Scotland, which gave him an opportunity of enlarging his acquaintance, and there they both took the degree of Doctor in Physic, which that university conferred on them with particular marks of respect.

His great readiness to advise and assist sick people, wherever he came occasionally, his care never to give any thing that might occasion abortion, and strict caution, never to reveal any of his patients' secrets, were three instances of his careful observance. Soon after his return to London, Dr. Sydenham very much pressed him to launch out into the business of his profession. Accordingly, in May, 1687, he came down into the country, and settled in his native soil, at Whitchurch: nor did any ask, as men usually do of a prophet, in his own country, *whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?* for his early genius had promised something great and considerable, and had anticipated the prejudice. When some of his friends at London had offered him their interest in some of the country gentlemen, to whom they would recommend him, he very thankfully declined making use of their kindness, saying, his practice he hoped could recommend him; nor did it fail to do so, for he quickly fell into very good business, and that which was useful to many; and without any great difficulty he

got over the prejudices which people commonly have against a young physician, and gave experimental proof, that though days should speak, and multitude of years should speak wisdom, yet neither skill nor success are tied to age.

June 30th, 1687, he married Katharine, the second daughter of Mr. Philip Henry, of Broad Oak, by whom he had six children, three sons and three daughters: one of his sons died of the small-pox, the other five he left behind him.

In the beginning of the year 1690 he removed to Chester; earnestly invited there by many of his friends, among whom he had given occasionally such proof of his abilities, as were sufficient to make a way for his advantageous settlement there, where there were several other physicians; and the event, both in the city and country about, rather outdid than fell short of expectation. Having thus brought down the story of his life to his settlement at Chester, where he spent the last nine years of it, we come to consider his character, which, in many particulars of it, was very exemplary and instructive. And we shall take a view of him,

I. As a scholar. While he lived he continued very industrious in the pursuit of knowledge; though his attainments in learning were very great, yet he was still pressing forward, and redeemed the time he could spare from practice, for study. His closet and books were to him what the tavern and glass of wine are to many men of business, a diversion from the cares, and the filling up of the vacancies, of business. Few new books came within his reach, but he found time to make himself master of their notions; but his delight was mostly in the writings of the ancients. Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch he much admired, and made them very familiar to him. Pliny's epistles he took great pleasure in. These, and other the like, he did not only look into, or cast an eye upon, now and then; but read them through and through, digested their discourses, and was able to give a good account of their reasonings. The passages he met with, which he thought useful to illustrate any text of Scripture, he transcribed at large, into his interleaved Bible, or some other repository. He likewise marked in his book what was most considerable, that he might review them with more ease, and advantage. Some of the ancient writers of the Christian church he likewise acquainted himself with, as Tertullian; and not long before his death, he spent a great deal of time in Lactantius's works, much to his satisfaction. Out of these also he selected many things, as before, and was communicative of what he read, in discourse with his friends. In natural philosophy, he was somewhat sceptical, and though he was well able to discourse of the history of nature, yet he was always ready to own himself unable to determine concerning the secret springs and causes. Of this he thus expresseth himself in a letter to a friend, upon occasion of his inquiry into or concerning the causes of muscular motions.

"I think it more ingenuous (and cheaper I am sure it is) for a man to confess his ignorance, than be at a great deal of pains to discover it; for my own part, I hope I can employ my time better than in such disquisitions as, after all my search and thought, will afford me no good satisfaction; it is as good to be unsatisfied at first as at last, when I find that a progress in the search does not lessen the difficulty."

Let us view him,

II. As the master of a family. In this capacity, his conversation was exemplary,

1. For prudence and virtue in his carriage towards his family and relations, as a husband, a father, and master. A very happy mixture of authority and love I have often observed in his domestic conduct, and such as renders parents and masters both easy to themselves and their families. He managed his children with great wisdom and tenderness, having them in subjection, with all gravity, as the apostle speaks, 1 Tim. iii. 4. and yet without harshness or severity, but on the contrary, with a discreet indulgence.

2. For piety and devotion in his family worship; in the discharge of which he was conscientious. Though his business hindered him often from observing a constant time for it, yet the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise, and that most commonly with reading the Scriptures in course, and singing psalms, were duly offered up in his family. He furnished his house with several of Mr. Tate's new translation of the Psalms, and sung them over in order, without reading the lines. I have observed it, as an evidence of his careful and profitable reading of the Scriptures, that in discourse, he would frequently mention what he had particularly taken notice of in that course of his reading.

The sermons he heard on the Lord's day, he constantly wrote, and diligently repeated them to his family at night, that they might give the more earnest heed to the things which they had heard. Upon occasion of any special providence, merciful or afflictive, in the family, he frequently desired the assistance of some of his relations, with his family, in prayer and praise. For some years before he died, he kept an annual thanksgiving to God in his house, for the recovery of his eldest son from a dangerous fever.

III. As a physician. The calling wherein he was called is confessedly needful and honourable, and a great blessing to mankind; and all that knew him, could not but look upon him as an ornament to it. Some of his own profession were pleased to say, they doubted not but if he had lived he would

have been one of the eminentest physicians in all these parts of England. In the study of physic he was constant and indefatigable, and even after he had obtained a considerable reputation by his practice, he continued as diligent in study as if he were again to lay the foundation. He read and collected many things out of the writings of the ancient physicians, Hippocrates, Galen, and others, and few of the modern improvements that were considerable escaped his notice. He laid out himself very much to procure books that might be helpful to him, and oft complained of his distance from London and Oxford, where he might have the advantage of large libraries. Of the writers in physic, he generally valued those most who wrote by way of narrative, and of matters of fact, and observations upon them, rather than those that raised hypotheses, and built upon them. Dr. Sydenham's works he had justly a great value for, and after he had often read them over, that he might yet more thoroughly acquaint himself with them, he drew a very large and complete index to them, alphabetically.

He had, for some years before he died, laid the scheme of a great project, which, if God had spared him to carry on and finish, would no doubt have been very acceptable to the learned world. It was a universal history of epidemic diseases, digested in the order of time, through all the ages and places of the world that we have any record of, to be collected out of the most authentic historians and best physicians. From such a collection as this, he thought many useful hints might be taken, not only for the discovery of the changes of the constitution of acute distempers, but also for their cure; for what is there of which it may be said, *See this is new*, Eccl. i. 10. He laid the plan of this design, and proceeded in it as far as his own library and his friends would furnish him with materials, but let it stand for want of such books as were necessary to the conducting of it, but could not possibly be procured. What he knew, he was very willing to impart to others, that were like to do good with it. "I hate concealment (saith he in a letter to a friend) and monopoly, especially in a faculty that is conversant with the lives of men."

In the practice of physic, he was exemplary for three things:

1. His diligence, faithfulness, and concern for his patients, whose case he did naturally care for. He took pains to study such cases as had difficulty in them, and consulted his books about them. He was more frequent in his visits than most physicians are, and was very industrious in his personal attendance, to prevent any mistake in making up or administering what he prescribed; in either of which an error may be fatal. He would never (unless in a very plain and common case) prescribe any thing till he himself saw the patient, for he looked upon the right understanding of the case (which is scarcely to be obtained but by personal view and examination) to be half the cure. In many acute diseases, he found it necessary to be much with the patient, that he might be aware of every curative indication, and observe which way nature strove to help itself, and might immediately come to its assistance. His labour and pains in travelling early and late, was not so much a fatigue to him, as his great care and concern of his patients, even those that were strangers to him, and those he got nothing by. One might see by his countenance, when he had a patient under his hand in perilous circumstances, and where life hung in doubt. Such cases often broke his sleep, and drew from him complaints, what a heavy burthen it was to him, to have the lives of people in his hands; but the great success he frequently had in the most difficult cases, yielded him a pleasure and satisfaction proportionable to the exigency of the case.

He was not very apt to give a patient over in despair of a recovery, but while there was any room left for the use of means, he would continue them; complaining that many were lost by being said to be so; and yet, where he apprehended the case very dangerous and desperate, he made conscience of letting the patients or their friends know it. He admonished them if the house were not set in order, to do it immediately. He had so great a tenderness for them that were under his care, that some of his patients have said, that he was to them no less a true friend, than a skilful physician.

2. In his charity to the poor. This he was very eminent for; as in other things, so particularly in the business of his profession. I believe I may safely say, that his patients whom he gave his advice to freely were many more than those he received fees from, for he was *the poor man's doctor*. He has sometimes travelled many miles to advise a poor body gratis, with as much kindness and cheerfulness as ever he visited the most generous and wealthy of his patients, and never neglected any for their poverty; nay, he not only gave his advice freely to the poor, but frequently gave them their physic too, to his great expense, and often lamented it, that so little care is taken of those poor, when they are sick, who, when they are well, make shift to subsist without being troublesome, and much desired that some liberal things might be devised for the support of such. To excite himself to all acts of kindness and beneficence, he wrote two Scriptures in Greek in the beginning of his pocket dispensatory, which he always carried about with him; one speaking the example of our Lord Jesus, Acts x. 38. *He went about doing good;* the other, the words of our Lord Jesus, Acts x. 35. *It is more blessed to give than to receive.* And because he was sometimes kind to those who were so rude and ungrateful as

not to own his kindness, that this might not discourage his charity, he wrote in the same book that remark of Pliny's, "It is most pleasant to be kind to the grateful, but most honourable to be kind to the ungrateful."

3. His piety and religion, which appeared even in the business of his profession, was sufficient to give the world another idea of *Religio Medici*, than it hath sometimes had. It was plain, that in following his practice, he aimed at the glory of God, and doing good, more than at getting wealth, and raising an estate. I have often heard him say, he would not take five hundred a-year to leave off his practice, (though perhaps he never got half so much by it,) such a mighty satisfaction had he in being useful and serviceable to his generation, as unto the Lord, and not unto men. It was an excellent saying, which he made his own, *Let me be God's hand.* His frequent and earnest prayers to God for his patients, and for a blessing on what he administered to them, and for direction in his prescriptions, did speak not only a tender concern for his patients, but also an active and lively belief of the providence of God, and of our dependence upon that providence, *that every man's judgment proceedeth from the Lord.* The observations he made of the influence which very small and minute circumstances had upon turning the event, strengthened his belief of the divine conduct, guiding the means to the end.

IV. We come in the last place, to take a view of him as a Christian. And here we find him in many particulars very exemplary.

He was a strict observer of the laws of morality and virtue, sobriety and temperance, justice and charity, which he looked upon as essential to pure religion, oft appealing to the most distinguishing character of good and bad men, 1 John iii. 7, 10. *He that doth righteousness, is righteous, and he that doth not righteousness, is not of God.* As he made it his business to do good unto all he was concerned with, so it was his care to do evil to none. He was ready in the Scriptures, and mighty in them. Some very judicious divines that have conversed with him in matters of religion, have been surprised and ashamed, to find one whose profession led him to other studies, as well acquainted with the Scriptures, as most of those whose profession obligeth them to that study. He was very much in meditation upon divine things; and when his thoughts fastened upon a subject, that was more than ordinary affecting, he committed them to writing. Many sheets of divine contemplation he has left behind him on some of the most important subjects. As, arguments to prove the being of God; another, concerning God's eternity; another, of the arguments of the truth of the Christian religion; another, of the present darkness we are in concerning the particulars of a future state; another, concerning the extent of divine grace; another, concerning religious joy, on 1 Thess. v. 16. *Rejoice evermore;* another, which he calls *thoughts on human life*, with divers others. Some curious and uncommon things there are in these dissertations, but all savouring of great piety and devotedness to God, and an experimental knowledge of divine things. Though he was himself thoroughly furnished for every good work, yet he was very diligent in his attendance upon public assemblies for religious worship, and often complained of it, (as one of the greatest infelicities of his profession,) that it very often unavoidably took up a good part of his sabbath time, and hindered him from the public worship of God, which would have been an intolerable grievance to him if he had not had this to comfort him, that our Lord Jesus Christ has taught us to prefer mercy before sacrifice, whenever they are rivals.

In his profession of Christianity he was a great enemy to narrow principles, and was actuated by a spirit of catholic charity and communion; and disliked nothing more in any party than their monopolizing of the church and ministers, and unchurching and unministering those who in matters of doubtful disputation differed from them, and forbidding those members to join at any time with such religious assemblies as could not be denied to have among them all the essentials of divine worship. He had a very great veneration for the pious and moderate divines of the church of England, no man more, and joined as seriously and reverently in the Liturgy as any man, when he was occasionally present at it, but in the choice of his stated communion he was determined (though to his prejudice in secular interest) by these two rules:

1. That we should choose to attend ordinarily upon those administrations, (as far as the divine providence puts them within our reach,) which we find to be most for our edification in knowledge and faith, in comfort and holiness, and most likely to answer the end of ordinances. He particularly pleaded for himself, that he that had so little time to spare for his soul from the business of his profession, had reason to improve that little to the best advantage. What is most edifying and advantageous every man is best able to judge for himself.

2. That it is most comfortable to join with those who take all occasions to express their love and respect for those Christians that differ in their apprehensions from them, and uncomfortable to hear those upon all occasions condemned in the lump, and put under the blackest characters, some of whom we have reason to believe fear God and work righteousness, and therefore doubtless are accepted of him.

These I know to be the principles he went upon, and in his practice according to them he was

steady, uniform, and constant; and I think he was not to be called a dissenter from the church of England, but a dissenter from all parties, or a consenter to catholic Christianity. He gave this reason among others why he would have his children baptized publicly, because he would publicly own a ministry which was condemned by many as null and invalid.

He was a great promoter and encourager of works of charity and mercy, was very ready to every good work of that kind, often mentioning the rule of judgment at the great day, Matt. xxv. 36. as giving the surest rule of practice now. His generous present which he made towards the building of the new chapel at Trinity College in Oxford was one instance of his forwardness to any good work, as it was of his gratitude to the nursery of learning in which he had his education.

Two things more I shall observe as very exemplary concerning his piety in its causes and principles.

1. His good thoughts of God. He delighted to speak, and much more to think, of the infinite mercy of God; that he is a being that doth not delight in punishing his creatures, but in doing them good; and would therefore by no means admit those opinions which exclude from salvation all Gentiles and unbaptized infants. The plain and undoubted truth of God's eternal goodness to all his creatures, that have not forfeited their interest in it, must be relied upon, and nothing which divine revelation has left us in the dark about set up in contradiction to it.

In reference to the manifestly deplorable state of a great part of mankind, he pleased himself with the thought, that this earth is but a small part of the universe, and that it is probable there are many worlds of holy and blessed beings which we know nothing of; and he was very inclinable to believe, that though in this earth they who find the way to life are comparatively few, yet taking the whole creation together, the everlasting monuments of God's mercy and love will be many more than those of his wrath and justice.

He took great pleasure in speaking of his own experience of the goodness of God to him, often mentioning with comfort that Scripture, Jer. iii. 4. *My Father, thou art the guide of my youth;* and observed with pleasure, to the glory of God, and the encouragement of his friends, how the hand of divine Providence had wisely managed his affairs to his comfort, beyond any design or foresight of his own.

2. His low thoughts of this world, which he often spoke of with great contempt, as vanity and vexation of spirit, and unworthy the affections of an immortal soul. So far was he from indulging the body, that there was nothing he complained of more, than that he found it such an entanglement and encumbrance to the soul. So little love he had to this life, that he often said he did not think it worth while to live, unless it were to do good; and as to worldly wealth, what more is it (said he) than food and raiment, and having that one may be content.

Taking example from his father-in-law, Mr. Henry, (of whom he was a very great admirer, witness the ingenious Latin epitaph he made upon him,) he interlined in his almanack each year a remark upon his birth-day, in Latin well worthy the transcribing, as speaking his thankfulness to God for the mercies of his life, his further dependence upon God's providence, and his desires and hopes of everlasting life.

On March 15th, 1696-7, he thus writes, "Ebenezer. I have been a sojourner and pilgrim in the earth these three-and-thirty years. I am obliged to say my days have been few. I cannot say they have been evil, for but few of the sorrows of mortality in events more afflictive, or health less constant, have happened to me. Divine Providence has afforded me a constant supply of life, and of all the happy conveniences of it, and with a tender care to aid me from the invading fury of those evils to which I have sometimes apprehended myself exposed."

"The issues of futurity set out by God in vast eternity shall never be viewed by mortal eye.

"March 15th, 1697-8. The fifteenth of March, 1663-4, was the day of my own birth; the fifteenth of March, 1683-4, was the day of my father's funeral: on one and the same day at the distance of twenty years, my own mother, his consort, delivered me into his tender arms, and our common mother, the earth, received him into the enclosure of the grave. So that the same time was a spring of day to him, and of grief to me. God had set the one over against the other, to prevent a luxurious mirth on the one hand, and disanimating sorrow on the other; but I am still within the lines of affliction, and that there is more occasion to lament myself, who am yet waiting for the goal, than him, who is safely arrived at it, is a thing indisputable. We are born to anguish, we die to triumph; and oh! thou happy soul, who, having piously and honourably discharged the duties and fatigues of mortality, art with endless pleasure and triumph at once got up to everlasting bliss, it remains that I follow thee. Heaven grant I may arrive at thee."

"March 15th, 1698-9. Infancy commences at birth, and continues to the 5th year of life. Puerility begins there and goes on to the 18th year. The time between that and 25 affords us the style of young men. The space between that and the 35th year is our most flourishing time. Afterwards till we arrive at 49 we are said to be middle aged. That being once passed we are justly declared old. I have therefore this very year and day entered on the last stage but one of mortality. It is most equal that now at last I abandon the vanities not only of childhood, but of youth too, and compose myself to designs that are manly. If human age must not be

reckoned beyond the 70th year, I have run over half my course. What dangers have I escaped! What blessings have I enjoyed by the mercy of my most kind God! Wherefore I entirely depend on him. I entirely commit myself to him who will certainly afford me seasonable relief in this weary pilgrimage, and bestow on me a blessed immortality in the native country of my then happy soul."

All that remains now, is to give some account of the period of his life, having seen the end of his conversation. From what he was and did it was easy to prognosticate to what an eminency he was likely to arrive, and how great a blessing his older years would prove to his age and generation; but this prospect was attended with melancholy prognostication that he would not be long-lived. His constitution was very tender and nice, his digestion bad, his body unable to bear much fatigue, and, in short, his soul too big and too active for it, and a lamp that burnt too fast to burn long.

Some slight fevers he had at his coming to Chester, which went off without any threatening symptoms, but left him very careful in the management of himself, which he did not in the way of self-indulgence, but of self-denial. But what fence can there be against the messengers of death when they come with commission from the God of life. The fever that was mortal to him arrested him March 29th, 1699, about noon, immediately after he had written a long letter to his dear friend and kinsman, Mr. Benion of Malmsbury. He feared he had taken cold the night before in the bookseller's shop, where he was detained by the perusal of a new book, but he had had a very good night and visited his patients that morning. The first invasion the disease made was very violent, in an extreme coldness and shivering, succeeded by a burning, no less violent, which after some hours went off in a very profuse sweat. He presently took the alarm, and apprehended it not unlikely that it might prove a summons to the grave.

He said he had now lived past half the age of man, which was longer than he had expected some years ago. Thus the arrests of death are no surprise to those who all the days of their appointed time wait till their change comes. He expressed much satisfaction in the mercy and goodness of God, and fastened upon his oath, that he hath no pleasure in the death of sinners. He likewise cheerfully resigned himself to the will of God whether for life or death, "What we will (said he) we think is best, but what God will we are sure is best." He addressed himself to his dying work with great seriousness and application. "I cannot think of death (said he) without concern, but I bless God I can think of it without terror;" and frequently in his sickness he spake of dying with all the concern and satisfaction that became a wise man, and a good Christian, and one who very well knew both that it is a serious thing to die, and yet that death hath no sting in it to a child of God. Many excellent things he said in his illness which spake a great contempt of the world, an entire resignation to the divine will, and a cheerful expectation of the glory to be revealed, which cannot be recovered in his own words, but deserved to be written in letters of gold. The disease after the first onset (which was fierce) seemed to retreat for two days, and gave good hopes of a speedy recovery, though he himself spoke doubtfully of his case; but on the 4th day it rallied again, and seized his spirits with such a violent assault, that he received the sentence of death within himself, and though afterwards there were some lucid intervals, yet from thenceforward he manifestly declined apace, and set himself very solemnly and deliberately to take his leave of this world, and to make his entrance into another; and one time or other, as his distemper gave leave, he scarce left any thing untouched that was proper to be said by a dying man. He several times said, that when he reflected upon his manifold failings and defects, he had reason enough to tremble at the thoughts of going to give up his account to God, but (said he) with an air of courage and cheerfulness, "I trust to the infinite mercy of God and the all-sufficient merits and mediation of the Lord Jesus;" and here he cast anchor, as one abundantly satisfied. Sometimes he was much enlarged in blessing God for the experience he had had of his goodness to him, which he said he could never enough admire; particularly he thanked God that he had kept him from deism, or from imbibing any corrupt principles of religion when he was abroad; also that he had not lived altogether a useless life in the world, but that God had owned him in his profession, and given him success in it. "I cannot express (said he) how good God hath been to me all my days, and it is my comfort that I am going to a world where I shall be for ever praising him." He said if he had thought his time would have been so short, he would not have spent so much of it as he had done in the study of heathen authors, but he did it with a good design, that he might acquaint himself with the dictates of the light of nature, and know how far they went, and he had found this search a very great confirmation to him of the truth of the Christian religion, which doth so highly improve and perfect natural religion, and relieves us there where that is manifestly defective, and leaves us at a loss.

He frequently expressed a great willingness to die, though he had upon many accounts reason enough to desire to live, but (said he) "every man must go in his order; let this be the order appointed for me, I am very well satisfied." He encouraged his relations and friends cheerfully to resign him up to the will of God, and desired they would do it without murmuring. He much delighted in prayer,

and joined with much affection in the prayers that were frequently made with him. During all his illness he seemed to have a very great composure of mind, and settled peace, except one night when he was in a delirium, or, as he called it afterwards, a stupor, which he could give no account of; and in that he expressed a dread of God's wrath, and some amazing fears concerning his everlasting state; but in a short time (through God's great goodness) that storm passed away, and he enjoyed a constant serenity of mind till he entered into everlasting peace. He bore the pains of his distemper with an exemplary patience and easiness of mind, making the best of every thing, and seldom complaining, but very thankful to those that attended him and ministered to him. He took a solemn farewell of those about him, spoke to his dear yoke-fellow with good words and comfortable words, kissed and blessed all his children, and to them that were become capable of receiving it gave good advice. He charged his son to be sure to study the Scriptures, and make them the guide of his ways; and, said he to him, "Whatever new opinions thou mayst meet with in philosophy, play with them as thou wilt, but never affect new notions and new opinions in religion, but stick to the good old religion of Christ and his apostles, and that will bring thee to heaven." He desired his children might read Mr. John Janeway's Life, and Mr. Baxter's Poor Man's Family Book, which latter he had read a little before he sickened; as he had sometime before read with abundant satisfaction (and abridged) his Reasons for the Christian Religion, and particularly expressed himself greatly pleased with that summary of religion which is there in a few words, *p.* 227. "Religion is nothing else, but faith turning the soul by repentance from the flesh and world, to the love and praise and obedience of God, in the joyful hope of the heavenly glory."

He called for his servants, and took leave of them with prayer and good counsel; he earnestly pressed upon them diligence in religion, and to take heed of all sin; and "see to it (said he) that you do that which you may reflect upon with comfort when you come to be in my condition." He commended the ways of religion and godliness to those about him as good ways, and such as he himself had experienced to be ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace.

It was an expression, among many, of his great humility, that to one of his affectionate farewells he gave me (Mr. Matthew Henry) he added, "and I pray God that those who survive me may profit more by your ministry than I have done, abundantly, abundantly more." He remembered his love and respects to many of his friends in the country, and (said he) "I must not forget the church of God. Though it be a time of trouble with the church in many places, yet those that are gone before, died in this belief, that God would do great things for his church in the latter days, and so do I too; Lord, do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion." He often comforted himself with the believing hopes and expectations of a better state on the other side death, and recited many Scriptures that speak of it: "Oh the glorious mansions (said he) in our Father's house, and glorious inhabitants in those mansions; pleasures for evermore." When he had some food given to him he said, "What a blessed state will that be when I shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more." When he was sometimes asked how he did, he answered, "I am going to another world, and I hope, through grace, to a better. I know (said he) whom I have trusted, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." One present answered, "A great truth." He replied, "Yes, and a great trustee." He said, "If it were the will of God, he would desire to die in the actual contemplation of the goodness of God, and the glory to be revealed."

No advice, no help, no means that could be had, were wanting, but the weakness of his constitution came against him, and forced nature to yield to the disease; which he was himself first aware of, and spoke with much cheerfulness, and submission to the divine will. The two last days of his sickness, though he continued sensible, yet he took little notice, but lay easy, and declined gradually, and on Saturday night, April 8th, about eleven o'clock, a little before the entrance of the sabbath, he entered into his rest, and went to keep an everlasting sabbath within the veil. I never saw any who seemed to die so easily and quietly as he did; there was no conflict, no struggle, no agony in his death, but he breathed his last without the least sigh, or groan, or wrestling. There was not only no sting in his death, but no bands in his death. Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.

The Tuesday following he was interred in Trinity Church in Chester, attended to the grave with abundance of tears and honourable testimonies; and it might be truly said at his funeral, as it was at Jacob's, "This is a grievous mourning." In so great a congregation there has seldom been so few dry eyes.

The Rev. Mr. Newcome of Tattenhall, his dear and intimate friend, preached his funeral sermon on Phil. i. 21. *To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain*, and by the character of him did him honour at his death.

# A SERMON,

## PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. ATKINSON,

### IN LONDON, JANUARY 7TH, 1712-13.

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ISAIAH vi. 8.

*Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.*

IT is no absurdity at all, at the ordination of a gospel minister, to borrow instructions from the mission of an evangelical prophet; for the treasure is for substance the same, which is lodged in both these earthen vessels. And though there are diversities of gifts,[a] and administrations, various degrees of light, and methods of revelation, yet in all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit; the very same Spirit of the Lord, that both came upon the Old-Testament prophets, and remains with the New-Testament ministry.[b] In allusion to the Old-Testament way of revelation, gospel preaching is called prophesying, let us *prophesy according to the proportion of faith.*[c] And the prophets are called the brethren of gospel ministers. The angel says to John, *I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets.*[d] The *ordinary* influences and operations of the Spirit, and its plentiful effusion, in *gospel times*, in the prediction and promise of it, is represented by the *peculiar and extraordinary* ways of discovery of the divine will *then* in use: *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,*[e] they shall have a *clear insight* into the things of God, and be able to *speak clearly* of them to one another.

None perhaps of all the Old-Testament prophets had a more awful and solemn mission than the prophet Isaiah; who spake so plainly and fully of Christ, and the grace of the gospel. Ezekiel's mission was likewise very awful; whose errand chiefly was to prove and threaten, and display the terrors of the law: but the vision that introduced his mission was more dark and mystical.

We dispute not, whether this was Isaiah's first mission; it is likely it was not, the sermons in the foregoing chapters being placed before it. He had, if I may so say, prophesied for some time as a candidate, that he might, first, be tried, and might himself make trial of his work; in that he was owned of God, and yet he had this solemn mission afterwards. He was, before, sent of God, spake in his name, and knew he did; but his commission was then virtual and implicit, but was now more expressly recognized, when his work grew more upon his hands, and the difficulties and oppositions he met with in it increased. Now this ambassador made his *public entry*.

If we look back to the preparatives for this solemnity, (which we have an account of in the foregoing verses of this chapter,) we shall find the prophet very deeply touched with a humbling sense of his own sinfulness, and a comfortable sense of the pardon of sin, and his acceptance with God. I take notice of these for instruction to you, brother, who are this day dedicating yourself to the service of God in the gospel of his Son, that you may walk in the same Spirit.

1. He was much affected with a sight and sense of his own sinfulness and unworthiness. See how he cries out, upon a sight of God in his glory, and hearing his holiness praised: *Woe is me, for I am undone;*[f] I am *cut off*, so the word is; I deserve to be cut off from all my privileges and hopes as an Israelite; for *I am a man of unclean lips*, unfit, una-

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[a] 1 Cor. xii. 4, 11. [b] John xiv. 16. [c] Rom. xii. 6.

[d] Rev. xxii. 9. [e] Joel ii. 28. [f] Isa. vi. 5.

ble to be employed in speaking for God: I dwell, indeed, *in the midst of a people of unclean lips*, who deserve to be reproved, and need to be reformed, but how unfit am I to be made use of as an instrument herein, who am myself a man of unclean lips; and never saw so much of it, nor so much of the evil of it, as now that mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

God looks upon those as *fittest* to be honoured by him, and employed for him, who are humble and low in their own eyes. When a soul is brought to cry out, Woe is me, for I am undone, it is then in a fair way to be saved for ever. As Christ, so Christians, are first humbled, and then exalted; like a corn of wheat, die first, and then revive.

And as to particular services, "Before honour is humility." When we see ourselves utterly unworthy of the honour, and unfit for the service, we are called to, then free grace will be the more magnified in passing by our unworthiness, and making us strong out of weakness. They who abase themselves under strong convictions of their own sinfulness and vileness, into an entire subjection to God's grace and government, and a cheerful condescension to the meanest services, these are they whom the King of kings delights to honour. *They* stand fairest for preferment in the Messiah's kingdom, and are likely to be great in it, who humble themselves like little children;[g] who do it naturally, and with sincerity, not artfully, affectedly, and with design.

2. He was likewise impressed with a comfortable assurance of the pardon of his sin, and his reconciliation to God. A coal from the altar was laid upon his mouth;[h] not to burn it, but to purify it, to take away the uncleanness of his lips which he complained of, for the sin that truly humbles us, shall not ruin us; and it was said to him, *Lo, this has touched thy lips, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.* And *blessed is the man*, thrice blessed is the minister, *whose iniquity is forgiven*,[i] and who knows it, by the witness of God's Spirit with his spirit. They who are thus sprinkled from an evil conscience, are best prepared to serve the living God,[k] and can come boldly to and from the throne of his grace.

None are so fit to display to others the riches of gospel grace, as those who have themselves received the comfort of it. They can best preach Christ crucified, who have known experimentally the power of his death, and are themselves clothed with that everlasting righteousness, which by it he brought in. And how feelingly may they preach repentance and remission of sins to others, who have themselves tasted the bitterness of discovered guilt, and the sweetness of a sealed pardon. And this is one reason why the ministry of reconciliation is committed to men like ourselves, who labour under the same burthens, and lie open to the same dangers, with the rest of mankind. The great prophet cries out, *Woe is me, I am undone*,—the great apostle cries out, *O wretched man that I am*,[l] that others, who make the same complaints with them, may be encouraged to hope for the same relief that they found; and that they may recommend to others the same foundation which they have themselves built upon, and comfort others with the same comforts wherewith they themselves were comforted of God.

The prophet being thus prepared to have so great a work and so great a trust put into his hand, we have, in the text and the following verses, the committing of that *work* and that *trust* to him; for as God sends none but those whom he has first prepared, so those whom he has by his grace prepared, he will some time or other find an opportunity to send, for God makes nothing in vain. Jeremiah, who is *formed* for a prophet, shall be *ordained* a prophet.[m]

Now observe in my text the solemn treaty and transaction between God and Isaiah upon this matter. Behold a communion between God and man; as, of old, God talked with Abraham.[n] *Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and wonder, O earth*, the Lord of life and glory converses familiarly with poor sinful dying worms of the earth, as one friend converseth with another. Isaiah hears the voice of the Lord, and understands it, returns a direct answer to it, and receives a reply; and thus a correspondence is settled between him and heaven, in order to the carrying on of the work that was before him.

This communion with God is that which all Christians must keep up by faith; both in receiving the word from God, and in lifting up their prayers to him. *When thou saidst, Seek ye my face*, I heard what thou saidst; understood the meaning of it, applied it to myself, and complied with it; my heart presently answered, *Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*[o] *Return ye backsliding children—Behold we come unto thee.*[p]

And it is that which ministers, particularly, are concerned to acquaint themselves with; for an *experimental* knowledge of the mystery of communion with God, which the greatest part of the world are such utter strangers to, is, without doubt, a very *necessary* qualification for that office and work, which was instituted on purpose for the maintaining and carrying on of that communion. How can we expect that God should speak *by* us, if we never heard him speaking *to* us; or that we should be accepted as the *mouth of others* to God, if we never spoke to him intelligibly and sincerely *for* ourselves? How can we carry on the treaty of peace between God and man, if we have not, by searching the Scriptures, come to know something of the mind of

g Matt. xviii. 4. h Matt. vi. 7. i Ps. xxxii. 1.
k Heb. ix. 14. l Rom. vii. 24.
m Jer. i. 5. n Gen. xvii. 3.
o Ps. xxvii. 8. p Jer. iii. 22.

God, nor, by searching into our own hearts, come to know something of the case of man? Moses was first well acquainted with God himself; inquired concerning his name, and heard it proclaimed; before he was employed as a mediator between God and Israel. And Samuel was first brought to know the Lord and his word, and then was established a prophet.[q]

Now, in the text we have two things concerning Isaiah's mission:

I. The counsel of God concerning it, *Whom shall I send?*

II. The consent of Isaiah to it, *Here am I, send me.* Each of these will furnish us with some useful observations, proper to the present occasion.

I. We have here *the counsel of God concerning it;* and it is good to trace all divine things to the divine counsels, the streams to the springs. God is here introduced, as it were, deliberating and advising with himself whom he should send, to show the house of Jacob their sins, and their misery and danger because of sin; as if he were considering and consulting about it, *Whom shall I send?* We have a like representation to Micaiah; when he saw the Lord sitting on his throne, surrounded with the host of heaven, and heard him saying, *Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead?*[r] Now this is spoken *ανθρωποπαθως—after the manner of men*, and therefore, according to our rule, we must take care to understand it *θεοπρεπως—so as becomes God*, so as not to derogate from the glory of any of his infinite perfections.

As God needs not to be counselled by others; for *who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him;*[s] so he need not consult with himself; for deliberating supposes something of hesitation, which is not to be supposed in the Eternal Mind. As God never varies from himself, so he never wavers in himself; *Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world.* When Christ asked Philip, *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* he said it only to prove him, for he himself knew *well* enough what he would do.[t]

But sometimes the wisdom of God, though never at a loss, is expressed by a solemn consultation, to show that what God does is the result of an eternal counsel. And some have observed that God is never represented consulting with himself, but in cases wherein man was concerned, who is the particular care of the divine providence. As, about the creation of man, *Let us make man;*[u] and after the fall, *The man is become as one of us;*[v] and when the nations were to be dispersed, *Let us go and confound their languages.*[w] God would hereby show that there is a counsel in his whole will;[x] and would teach us to ponder the path of our feet,[y] and to consider our ways,[z] and to do nothing rashly, but to make use of our own wisdom, by communing with our own hearts; and of the wisdom of others, by asking advice of them, for in multitude of counsellors there is safety.

And God's being introduced here *considering* whom he should send, intimates that the sending forth of ministers, is a work not to be done but upon very mature deliberation, and with good advice. Christ did not send out his apostles to preach, till he had kept them some time with him as his pupils; and our rule is, to lay hands suddenly on no man, lest we be partakers of other men's sins.[a]

Now we may here observe:

1. Who *it is that is here consulting;* "I heard the voice of the Lord" proposing the question: and it is God "*in his glory;*" and it is God in *Three Persons.*

(1.) It is God *in his glory*, the same that he saw in the first verse, *upon his throne, high and lifted up.* Not that he saw his essence, no man has seen that or can see it, but such a display of his glory in vision, as he was pleased at this time to manifest himself by, as to Moses and Israel at mount Sinai.

When God thus appeared in his glory and majesty, attended with a glorious retinue of holy angels and their adorations, then was he considering whom to send upon an embassy to man: and it tends very much to set off the condescension of God's grace to us, that he is so highly exalted, and yet so kindly takes cognizance and care of us. His goodness is his glory, and adds lustre to his greatness. And, among men, those are truly the greatest who are the best, and do most good; *as* it magnifies his goodness, that though he is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, was so from eternity, and would have been so to eternity, if we had never been, or had been miserable, yet he has an eye to man, and a concern for him. Though he be infinitely *above* the possibility of *being* benefited by us, yet thus he *visits and regards us.*[b] Thus God's *majesty* makes his *mercy* shine the brighter; as where he says, that the same God who rides upon the heavens by his name Jah, is a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows.[c] Though God be high, yet he has respect unto the lowly; and though it be condescension to behold the things done *in heaven*, yet his regards stoop much lower, and he dwells *with men upon the earth.*[d]

And methinks it puts a great honour upon the work of the ministry, that when God was about to send a prophet to speak to his people in his name, he would thus appear in the glories of the upper world, upon a throne high and lifted up, as one who is God over all, blessed for evermore; higher than the highest. Though ministers are, themselves, men upon a level with you, despicable and despised, the *foolish things of the world*, and the *weak;* yet he

q 1 Sam. iii. 7, 20. r 1 Kings xxii. 19, 20. s Isa. xl. 13, 14. t John vi. 5, 6. u Gen. i. 26. v Gen. iii. 22. w Gen xi. 17. x Eph. i. 11. y Prov. iv. 26. z Hag. i. 5. a 1 Tim. v. 22. b Ps. viii. 1, 4. c Ps. lxviii. 4, 5. d Ps. cxiii. 5. 6.

that *sends* them is enthroned, is greatly exalted. Though their original is mean, their character is truly great, they are the ambassadors of the King of kings.

Let this support and encourage faithful ministers under all the contempts that are put upon them, and the reproaches they are loaded with, that how much soever they are trampled upon and run down, he that sent them, and will bear them out, whose messengers they are, and whose messages they bring; who does protect them, and will reward them; is the Lord, high and lifted up. Such an honour does it put upon the gospel ministry, and such encouragement does it give to gospel ministers, that our Lord Jesus gave these gifts unto men, when he ascended on high, when he entered upon the glories of his exaltation, and rode in triumph, leading captivity captive.[e] Ambassadors have respect paid them according to the dignity, not of their private families, but of the prince who sends them.

(2.) It is God *in Three Persons;* which is plainly intimated in the plural number here used, *Who will go for* US? It is *one God* who says, Whom shall *I* send; and yet this ONE is *three persons*, the very same who said, Let US make man; and it is intimated in the *plural* termination of "*Elohim*," yet joined with words of the *singular* number; as *In the beginning* אלוהים ברא *DII creavIT.* As sometime "*Eloah*," which is *singular*, is joined with a word *plural*, *Where is God my Maker*, אלוה עשי—*God my Makers.*[f] *Remember now thy Creator*, בוראיך—*thy Creators.* Which (says Coccejus) though they are not full proofs of the doctrine of the Trinity, yet they are memorials of it, intimations of it for the present, till it should be more fully revealed in the New Testament.

The adversaries of this truth seek to avoid the force of the argument from this text, and the like, by saying, That when God says, *Let* US *make man*, and *Who will go for* US, he speaks *more regio—in the style of kings.* "*We* will and command;" *so the Socinians;* but it was not so used in the Hebrew language. That it is God consulting with his *house of judgment;* so the Jews; but they know not, nor can tell us, what they mean by it;—with the angels; so says Grotius. But do prophets go on the service of angels? or are they sent on their errands? No, these are mere evasions. It is the SAME that says, *Whom shall I send?* in the singular number; and, *Who will go for us?* in the plural number.

And to throw more light upon, and add greater weight to, this, it is observable, that the *words* which follow in the two next verses, *which* the LORD said, *Go make the heart of this people fat,*[g] are, in the New Testament, applied both to the SON, and to the HOLY GHOST. They are applied to the SON, where Esaias, *when* he said these things, is said to have seen HIS *glory*, the glory of CHRIST, (for of him the evangelist is there writing,) and to have spoken *of* HIM;[h] and, to the BLESSED SPIRIT, where it is said, *Well spake the* HOLY GHOST, *by Esaias the prophet, unto our fathers; saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand.*[i]

The three persons in the blessed Trinity gloriously concur, as in the creating of man, so in the redeeming and governing of man, and particularly in sending messengers to the children of men, to bring them revelations of the will of God. Ministers are ordained, in the same name into which Christians are baptized, *In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;*[k] nor could they baptize in *that* name, if they were not commissioned by the authority, and devoted to the glory, of *that* name. The *three* that *bear record on earth; the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood,*[l] that is, the Scriptures, and the two sacraments, are derived from the *three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit.* And the *last named* of the three that bear record in heaven, is the same with the *first named* of the three that bear record on earth; as the *nexus* or bond of union between them. And the Spirit speaking to the churches:[m] by ministers, as expositors of the Scripture, and stewards of the mysteries of God, they may therefore be justly looked upon as sent by, and going for, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2. *What the consultation is, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Some think *this* refers to the particular message of wrath against Israel, which we have in the next verses: Who will be willing to go upon such a melancholy errand? Who can be prevailed with to carry a message which they cannot but carry, as the prophet Ezekiel did, in the bitterness of their souls;[n] and as St. Paul, with great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart?[o]

But I rather take it, more largely, for all the messages which he was intrusted to deliver in God's name to that people; the *secondary* EFFECT of which was, the making of their "heart fat, and their ear heavy," but it was by no means the *primary* INTENTION. The proper tendency of the word, was to be a savour of life unto life; but, if it prove a savour of death unto death,[p] that is their fault who make an ill use of it.

"*Whom* shall I send?" Some one must be sent, this perishing self-destroying people must have fair warning given them; but it was hard to find a proper messenger. Not that God was in doubt whom to send; when he has work to do, he will not want instruments to do it by, for he can either find men fit, or make them so; but it intimates, that the business was such as required a well accomplished mes-

e Eph. iv. 8. f Job xxxv. 10. g Job ix. 15.
h John xii. 40, 41. i Acts xxviii. 25, 26. k Matt. xxviii. 19.
l 1 John v. 7, 8. m Rev. ii. 7. n Ezek. iii. 14.
o Rom. ix. 2. p 2 Cor. ii. 16.

senger, beyond those whom he had hitherto employed: he must exalt to this honour one *chosen* out of the people,[q] and qualified with uncommon abilities. "*Who* is a chosen man," a choice man, "that I may appoint over her, and who is that shepherd that will stand before me?"[r]

God now appeared attended with holy angels, bright and blessed seraphims, who had each of them six wings, and could make more haste, and deliver a message better, than any of the sons of men could; and yet he asks, *Whom shall I send?* for he would send by a man like themselves. When Ahab's *false* prophets were to deceive him to his destruction, it was done by a lying spirit who went forth from before the Lord.[s] But when gospel grace was to be prophesied of by a *true* prophet, no created spirit is employed, but God's own Spirit comes upon the prophets.

Now hence we may gather three observations:

(1.) It is the unspeakable favour of God to us, that he is pleased to communicate his mind to us, and to make it known by men like ourselves. Divine revelation is a signal token of the divine good will, and ought so to be accounted. Man, by reaching at forbidden knowledge, forfeited all that which would be saving and serviceable. And how well did he deserve to be deprived of all the *light* of divine revelation, who had hid his *light* of human reason under a bushel, and had almost buried it in darkness; and by his ignorance had wilfully *alienated himself from the life of God.*[t] Justly might God have said, that he would never *speak any more* to such a rebel; and then his case had been as desperate as that of fallen angels; and he must have wandered endlessly, had not God been his guide.

But in pity to poor man, and in order to his recovery and redemption, beams of divine light are afresh darted from heaven; the great Shepherd sends after this stray sheep to fetch it home; *He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;*[v] *unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;*[w] *unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men.*[x] Notice is given us of the displeasure of God against us, that we may avoid it; of the kindness and good will of God to us, that we may improve it; and of the duty God requires of us, that we may perform it. He has not hid from our eyes the things that belong to our peace and welfare, but has at sundry times, and in divers manners, given us to understand them, and put us in mind of them.

These notices he sends to us by those of the same nature with us. The people of Israel were so frightened at the terrors of Sinai, that they desired thenceforward God would speak to them by Moses; *Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die.*[y] Herein they spoke the sense of all mankind, and God agreed to it; and though, since then, angels have been often sent upon particular errands, yet the ordinary instructions of the church have been by *men formed out of the clay*, whose *terror shall not make us afraid*, nor *their hand be heavy upon us;* and they are, *according to our wish, in God's stead.*[z] And this is very agreeable to a state of probation; in which, it were not a fair trial if, by the appearance of angels, those things were made sensible, which are now the objects of faith. The Scriptures were not written by angels, but by holy men of God, and the dispensing of the gospel is committed to faithful men.

How ungrateful are those to God, who, instead of giving him thanks for the favour of divine revelation, ridicule it, and asperse it; and, under pretence of free-thinking, shake off all the sacred obligations of it, and thereby forfeit and renounce all the advantages of it. It is the greatest indignity that can be done to God, and the greatest injury to mankind. God has, in tenderness to us, sent us his mind by *men like ourselves*, and they abuse this favour, by making *themselves* equal with those who spake by divine authority. But if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.[a]

(2.) It is a rare thing to find one that is fit to go for God, to carry his messages to the children of men. God here asks, *Whom shall I send?* Where is the person who may be intrusted with such an errand; *Who is sufficient for these things?*[b] A skilful, faithful interpreter of the mind of God, who shall show unto man his uprightness, is one of a thousand.[c] He must be an able man indeed, who is fit to be a minister of the New Testament.[d]

Such a complication of gifts and graces, as are requisite to the right discharge of this great trust, is very seldom found. Such a degree of insight into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, as is necessary to make a man skilful; and such a degree of courage for God, and concern for souls, as is necessary to make a man faithful; is hardly to be met with. Many are willing enough to go, who yet are not fit to be sent; as there are some fit to be sent, who are not willing to go. Solomon speaks of the inconvenience of sending messages by the hand of fools; they who do so, he says, *cut off the feet and drink damage.* And though men have talents, it is little better if they have not application; for *as vinegar to the teeth, and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to him that sends him.*[e] Of what ill consequence is it then, to have God's messages sent by the hand of fools or sluggards; so that considering how much folly and sloth prevail, we may well ask, as those at a loss, Who shall be sent, and who will go on God's errands?

q Ps. lxxxix. 19. r Jer. xlix. 19. Jer. l. 44. s 1 Kings xxii 20, 23. t Eph. iv. 18. v Mic. vi. 8. w Job xxviii. 28. x Prov. viii. 4. y Exod. xx. 39. z Job xxxiii. 6. 7. a Luke xvi. 31. b 2 Cor. ii. 16. c Job xxxiii. 23. d 2 Cor. iii. 6. e Prov. x. 26.

(3.) None are allowed to go for God, but those who are sent by him. He will own none but such as he himself appoints. As the ordinances must be only such as are of his institution, so the ministers of the ordinances must be of his designation, else they cannot expect that his presence should be with them, or that his power should accompany their administrations. It is fit the master should nominate his own servants; he *knows whom he hath chosen.* When Christ would send forth apostles, he *called unto him whom he would.*[f]

We are not now to expect *immediate* calls, such as the prophets and apostles had; called *not of men or by men.* Ministers have no extraordinary commissions to produce, nor any miraculous ratifications; they undertake not to foretell things to come, by the accomplishment of which to prove their mission; those were requisite to set the wheels in motion, both in the Old Testament and in the New, but they cease when the thing is settled. Nor do we think that the mission of a minister depends upon the uncertain thread of a lineal succession from the apostles, which we cannot believe to be either requisite on the one hand, or sufficient on the other. But there is some resemblance between God's calling of ministers now, and his calling of prophets of old. Prophets *were* called when they were qualified for the office, when the word of the Lord came to them; and there were schools of the prophets, in which young men were trained up in preparatory exercises; so, *now*, those whom God has by his Spirit qualified for the work of the ministry, have ONE considerable step toward a divine call: to which was, *then*, added a strong inclination to this work, purely for its own sake; Jeremiah says, that God's word was as a burning fire shut up in his bones;[g] and that is, *still*, the OTHER step toward a divine call,—a sincere desire to glorify God, and serve the interests of Christ's kingdom, and promote the salvation of precious souls, without regard to any secular advantage whatsoever. They in whom such qualifications for the work and such dispositions to it meet, may be accounted sent of God. And on these two the church of England seems to lay the stress of a *due call* to the ministry, in the question put to all who offer themselves to be ordained, whether they think themselves moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the office of the ministry? For it is certain, none are moved to it by the Holy Ghost, who are not in some measure fit for it, or who desire it for the sake of secular advantages. But those who are thus "called of God," ought to have their qualifications examined by proper judges; and, then, by the word and prayer, (in which they will have to be employed, whose office it is to give themselves to the word and prayer,) they must be solemnly recommended to God, and to the word of his grace; and their dedication of themselves to God, and the service of his church, must be recognized. They who by office *ministered unto the Lord, as prophets* and *teachers*, were *ordered*, by fasting, and prayer, and the *imposition of hands*, to separate Barnabas and Saul to the work *whereunto God had called them.*[h]

This is entering in by the door; as all who will approve themselves good shepherds must. *How shall men preach except they be* thus *sent?*[i] God complained of those who ran, and he did not send them;[k] and he tells them (which is threatening enough) that therefore they should not profit the people at all: those who go without *sending*, will come back without *speeding*. God will own his own work, and his own appointments, but not men's usurpations. Both the external and internal call are necessary; and neither must be set up exclusive of the other. There must be an *internal* call, for God will be served with the spirit in the gospel of his Son; and there must be likewise an *external* call, for God is the God of order, and will have his own work done in his own way. And those in whom both these meet, may, with St. Paul, thank Christ Jesus for putting them into the ministry, and may expect that he will own them, and stand by them.

II. We have here the consent of Isaiah to this mission. When he heard God ask, *Whom shall I send?* he readily answered, *Here am I, send me.* How well does it become all who love God, and have a zeal for his honour, to step in to the service of his kingdom and interest, when there is most occasion, and when the necessity of its affairs calls most for it; to be ready to go on God's errand, when none else will, and there is a failure of messengers, "Do you as you will, *I will serve the Lord.*" It is an honour (though it cannot but be a grief) to be singular, in appearing for God; and to appear active for him, when multitudes decline his service as mean and perilous; to make offers to work for him, when others seek, by excuses and evasions, to shift it off.

O what backwardness is there in many to a good work, when it has any thing of difficulty or disgrace attending it; or to any service for God, when other employments are more gainful and creditable in the world. Jonah is called to go to Nineveh, but he has no liking to the errand, and therefore flees to Tarshish. The tribes of Israel are summoned to appear in defence of the public liberty and property, against Jabin king of Canaan, to come in to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty; and, while *Gilead abides beyond* Jordan, and Dan cautiously *remains in ships*,[l] for the princes of Issachar, that intelligent[m] as well as industrious tribe, bravely to

f Mark iii 13. g Jer. xx. 9. h Acts xiii. 1–3. i Rom. x. 15.

k Jer. xxiii. 21. l Judges v. 17. m 1 Chron. xii. 3.

appear with Deborah, even Issachar and Barak; for Zebulun and Naphtali to *jeopard their lives to the death in the high places of the field,*[n] in the common cause, this is thankworthy. He is the truly Christian hero, who dares lay his hand to a despised plough, and a deserted one, who has courage to submit to a yoke, which so many, like the nobles of Tekoa, are ashamed and afraid to put their necks under.[o] Those who thus boldly appear for the keeping up of religion's interest, are worthy of double honour. This was it that gained Levi the honour of being God's tribe, the holy tribe, that when Moses made proclamation in the gate of the camp, *Who is on the Lord's side, to avenge the quarrel of his covenant* upon the makers of the golden calf,[p] that tribe distinguished themselves, and came in to Moses. Thus did Isaiah here; when every one was shy of the office, he was eager to receive it.

The errand on which Isaiah was to go, was a very melancholy errand, *Go make the heart of this people fat;* and yet he offered himself to the service. When we are called to act or speak for God, we must not say, We would go, if we were sure we should have good success, and our message would be acceptable; but we must *go*, and leave the success to God. Lord, make what use thou pleasest of me, I will not murmur or dispute. Though in the *event* our ministry should prove contrary to what it is in the *intention*,—to harden people instead of softening them, and to aggravate their condemnation instead of preventing it, which is a very uncomfortable, discouraging consideration, yet we must go on in it, knowing that in the issue God will be glorified.

Isaiah had been himself in a very melancholy frame in the 5th verse, *Woe is me, for I am undone*, much indisposed and burthened; yet now he has courage enough to offer himself to the work, which then he could not think of without terror; for he had been assured that his sins were pardoned, his iniquity taken away, and then his fears are silenced, the clouds are blown over, and all is well. Many have come to be eminently serviceable to God and his church in their day, that at first were low-spirited, and laboured under great discouragements. When God by his Spirit speaks to the heart good words and comfortable words, those who like Daniel were fallen with their faces to the ground, are wonderfully lifted up and encouraged, and are ready to say, as he did, *Now let my Lord speak, for thou hast strengthened me.*[q]

Isaiah's saying, *Here am I, send me*, speaks three things, for direction, to those who are setting out in the work of the ministry. His readiness; his resolution; and his referring himself to God.

1. His *readiness*. He does not make objections, as Moses did, *O my Lord, I am not eloquent*, or, *Send by the hand of him whom thou wilt send,*[r] any body but me; but, Behold me; I present myself to thee, to be employed as thou pleasest: *Here I am, send me.* He was a volunteer in the service; not pressed into it, but willing in this day of power:[s] in this as in other things God loves a cheerful giver,[t] a cheerful offerer. *My heart* (says Deborah) *is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly.*[u] It is recommended to the elders to feed the flock of God, not of constraint, but willingly, and of a ready mind.[v] In all acts of obedience to the calls of God, and assistance to the work of God, we must be free and forward, as those who know that we serve a good Master, whose work—not only his for us, but ours for him—is honourable and glorious; it is its own wages. Let us be brought under the yoke of Christ, by the constraining power of his love to us, drawing out our hearts in love to him again; and *that* is the acceptable sacrifice, that which is bound to the horns of the altar, with these cords of a man, these bonds of love.

How ready is God to hear and answer our calls; he says, *Behold me, behold me,*[w] even to those who were not *called by his name*. Much more ready is he to say, *Here I am,*[x] to those that *call upon him*. And should not we then be ready to answer his calls, though the service we are called to be never so difficult and hazardous? Desire not to be excused, when God has work for you to do, nor let any thing keep you back from that honour.

2. His *resolution*. He gives not only a free consent, but he is firm and fixed in it; does not hesitate or waver, but is ready both to swear to it, and to perform it; and he will not be beaten off it, no more than the people of Israel, when they said, *Nay, but we will serve the Lord;*[y] or Ruth, when she said, *Entreat me not to leave thee, or to turn from following after thee.*

*Here am I*, not only ready to go, but resolved, in the strength of divine grace, to encounter the greatest difficulties, and to abide by the service to the end. Send me, and I will adhere to it whatever it cost me, and will never draw back. Thus Christians, thus ministers, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, should war the good warfare with courage and constancy; *Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?*[z] What an acceptable servant is this, that binds his soul with a bond to the work of God, and is willing to have his ear bored to God's door-posts, to serve him for ever. And good reason have we, *thus*, to serve Christ, for with *such a steady and unshaken resolution* did he undertake to save us; when it was asked, Who will be man's redeemer? *who will take the book, and open the seals?*[a] and there was found none who would venture upon it; then said Christ, *Lo I come;* and finding it written of him

[n] Judg. v. 15, 18. [o] Neh. iii. 5. [p] Exod. xxxii. 26. [q] Dan. x. 19. [r] Exod. iv. 10, 13. [s] Ps. cx. 3. [t] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

[u] Judg. v. 9. [v] 1 Pet. v. 2. [w] Isa. lxv. 1. [x] Isa. lviii 9. [y] Josh. xxiv. 21. [z] Jer. xxx. 21. [a] Rev. v. 5.

in the volume of the book, he determines, he delights to do the will of God;[b] and shall not fail or be discouraged.[c]

We find this prophet, long after, reflecting with abundant satisfaction upon that steadiness of resolution with which he entered upon his prophetical office; and in it he was both a type of Christ, and a pattern to Christians. *The Lord God*, says he, *hath given me the tongue of the learned*, which he did by touching his lips with a coal from the altar; *he hath opened mine ear*, *he* has promised to *help me*, and *he is near that justifieth me*, and therefore *I have set my face like a flint, I know that I shall not be ashamed.*[d] Those who thus set out with resolution, may depend upon God to bear them out.

3. His *referring himself to God.* His expressing himself thus generally, *Here am I, send me*, intimates this; Lord, employ me as thou thinkest fit; cut out what work thou pleasest for me. I will never PREscribe, but ever SUBscribe. Here am I, ready to go to whom, and on what errand, thou wilt, whatever objections may be made against it. Lord, I am at thy service, entirely at thy disposal. Let the will of God be done *by* me, and done *concerning* me.

Thus we should address ourselves to the work of the Lord; with an entire resignation of ourselves to his wisdom and sovereignty. The heart must be *tabula rasa—white paper to his pen*, soft wax to his seal: let him write upon me what he pleases, and make what impressions *he* pleases upon me. We must enter upon the service of God, with Joshua's question, *What saith my Lord unto his servant?*[e] And with St. Paul's, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And with the implicit faith and obedience of the child Samuel, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears.* I desire nothing more but the honour of receiving thy commands, and a heart to comply with them.

The mind thus entirely referred to God, is most easy and quiet to itself, as waiting to know his mind; in dependence upon his promise, that the meek he will guide in judgment, and teach his way. If we impartially search the Scriptures, we may thence learn, what, in *general*, God will have us to say and do for him; and if we keep our eye upon his providence, we may by that be assisted in the application of the general rules of the word, for in it God guides us with his eye; and thus by committing our way and works to the Lord, with, *Here am I, send me*, we may find a leading star in all our counsels, and firm footing for all our resolves; thus we stand in an even place.[f] And certainly, we are most *our own possessors*, when we are least *our own masters*; and have the greatest enjoyment of ourselves, when we are most cheerfully and unreservedly devoted to God, with, *Here am I, send me.*

## APPLICATION.

Of the many observable, useful hints we have given you from these words, I shall only resume two, upon which to ground a word of exhortation; which I trust may be profitable to all of us who are ministers, and particularly to you, brother, who are now devoting yourself to the service of our great Master in this high and holy calling, for the advancing of the common interests of his kingdom among men, and the common salvation of precious souls. We are here taught, 1. Whom we are sent by. It is God who says, *Whom shall I send?* and to him the prophet addresses himself, *Send me.* And, 2. Whom we go for; we go for God; *Who will go for* US?

1. Going forth into the ministry, we must look up to God to be sent by him. It is the work of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, to send ministers, the ambassadors of reconciliation; and therefore to him our eye must be: "Lord, send me. When thou art sending abroad thy messengers, let me be one; for unless thou send me, I cannot go." At our first setting out in the service of God, and when we go forth upon any particular errand, this must be our prayer, *Lord, send me.*

We who have been many years engaged in this work, are concerned to inquire, what manner of entering in we had,[g] and whether we looked up to God at our setting out; whether we had our eye up unto him, and a single eye; whether our desire was toward him, and our dependence upon him? Whether we took our ministry from *his* hand, and devoted it to *his* praise? I hope we did; and we have had the comfort of it many a time, with reference to the infirmities we have laboured under, and the many difficulties we have struggled with. I am weak, I am forgetful, and meet with much discouragement from without, and from within, but, *O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant.* Let us still look up to him, and derive fresh encouragements from day to day, from his promise to be with his ministers always to the end of their day, and to the end of the world.[h] If God sent us, he will stand by us, will own us, will carry us on, and bear us out, and will never leave us. Our Master often speaks of God, as of him that sent him, and for that reason doubted not but that he was with him; so that when all his disciples fled and left him alone, yet he was not alone. And as the Father sent him, so he sends his ministers, who, therefore, ought to have an eye to his hand, as he had to his Father's, which upheld him.

And you, brother, who are now to be listed under the banner of Christ, may from hence take direction; it is by prayer that you are to be set apart, not only

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b Ps. xl. 7, 8. c Isa. xlii. 4. d Isa. l. 4, 5, 7, 8. e Josh. v. 14.

f Ps. xxvi. 12. g 1 Thess. i. 9. h Matt. xxviii. 20.

by ours for you, but by yours for yourself. That you may, therefore, take God along with you, and have him with you in this great undertaking, lift up your heart to God in this short but comprehensive petition, *Lord, send me; Lord Jesus, send me;* for it is the Son of man that holds the *stars* in his right hand.[j]

Lord, *send me*, that is,

(1.) Lord, give me a *commission*. The gospel we are to preach is not our own, or of our own framing, but it is the gospel of God, *the glorious gospel of the blessed God*,[k] it is the contrivance of his wisdom, it is the proposal of his grace; and, therefore, from him we must receive our warrant to publish the covenant, to apply the seals to it, and take in subscriptions. All who are duly qualified for the work, and inclined to it, and enter regularly upon it, and obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful in the discharge of it, may look upon themselves as sent of God; and the honour of being of that number, is what you should be ambitious of.

*Lord, send me*, is, Lord, let me know that thou sendest me, and that I am a minister not *of man, or by man*, but *by Jesus Christ, and God the Father*.[l] Let me know it by Christ's powerful, gracious *breathing on me*, and saying, *Receive the Holy Ghost*. Lord, let me have my credentials under the broad seal of heaven, and know myself authorized to be an ambassador, or resident, to carry on the treaty of peace and reconciliation between God and man; let me know it by the working of the Spirit upon my heart, as an enlightening, quickening, sanctifying Spirit, and that shall be the witness of the Spirit with my heart, that I have not taken this honour to myself, nor am an intruder, but am called of God to it.

We may not now ask for sensible signs, as Gideon did, who once and again proved God with the fleece; but we may and must ask to have more abundant satisfaction concerning our call, by the bestowing of spiritual gifts upon us, and the enriching of us with divine graces, and with strength in our soul. That the *ministry* is a divine institution, appears from the Spirit in the word; that *such a minister is of divine designation*, appears by the Spirit in the heart, which yet, sometimes, is such a new name, as *no man knows, saving he that receives it*.[m]

(2.) Lord, give me the necessary *qualifications* for this service. *Send me*, that is, fit me for this work, and enable me to do it as it should be done. God never sends any, but such as he gives to be in some measure well apprized of the errand they go upon; his ambassadors never have credentials without instructions. When the apostles were sent forth to *preach*, they were told *what to preach*, and were filled with the knowledge of the gospel mysteries. When therefore we beg of God to send us, we beg of him full instructions what to say and do in pursuance of our commission, that we may give a good account of our stewardship, when we must be no longer stewards.

*Lord, send me*, is, Lord, give me a mouth, and wisdom; a door of utterance, that I may speak the word boldly; a spirit of wisdom, that I may know the things which are freely given us of God. Teach me what I shall say. Put that word into my mouth, which shall reach the consciences of those who hear me. The Hebrew phrase for consecration is, *filling the hand;* which intimates, not only the greatness of the work of the ministry, for they who are called to it have their hands full, but its dependence upon divine aids and supplies. We have nothing to give out to God's people, but what he gives in to us; nothing wherewith to fill their hearts, unless he fill our hands; as, in Ezekiel's vision, the man clothed with linen had his hands filled with coals of fire from between the cherubim.[n]

God gives ministers their *commission* by his Son, who, when he ascended on high, conferred those gifts upon men; but he gives them their *instructions* by his Spirit,[o] who is given to make up the want of Christ's bodily presence, and to carry on his undertaking; and of whom Christ has said, *He shall take of mine, and show it unto you*.[p] We must therefore pray for the Spirit; all Christians must, and are encouraged to do so by that promise: *He will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*.[q] Ministers have special need of the Spirit, as a spirit of revelation, that they may know the things of God; and, as a spirit of truth, to rectify their mistakes, and to lead them into all truth.

And ministers' work being to speak not only *from* God *to* his people, but *to* God *for* his people, they have as much need of the Spirit to assist them in prayer as in preaching, and to be in them a spirit of supplication as a spirit of illumination. And for this, also, God will be *inquired of;* to him we must go with this request, Lord, teach me what I shall say, both in the word and in prayer, for I cannot, in either of them, order my speech by reason of darkness.[r] Lord, give me the heart of the upright, and the tongue of the learned, and thus, *Lord, send me*. Ministers are stars that shine by a borrowed light: to the fountain of light they must therefore apply themselves; and he having said to us, *From him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away*, will not turn away from us, if we come to borrow of him; especially when it is to borrow a stock wherewith to trade, in his service, for his glory.

It is a very proper sign which some churches use in the investing of ministers in their office, to

[j] Rev. ii. 1. [k] 1 Tim. i. 11. [l] Gal. i. 1. [m] Rev. ii. 17. [n] Ezek. x. 2, 7. [o] John xiv. 26. [p] John xvi. 14. [q] Luke xi. 10. [r] Job xxxvii. 19.

put the New Testament, or Bible, into their hands; not only to signify, that they have authority to preach the word of God, but that they must fetch all their furniture for their work from the Scriptures; those they must consult, those they must study. That is the rule they must go by, the model they must build by; there is the pattern showed them in the mount; that is the card and compass they must steer by. *Lord, send me*, is, Lord, put the Bible into my heart, Lord, make me ready and mighty in the Scriptures, that thence I may be thoroughly furnished for every good word and work.

(3.) Lord, give me *opportunity*. This door also God has the key of, as well as the door of the heart, and of the lips; and our eye must be to him for the opening of it, and the making of it a wide door, and an effectual one, though there be ever so many adversaries.[s] *Lord, send me*, is, Lord, having hired me into thy service, find me but something to do for thee; having sent me into thy vineyard, cut out work for me there, that I may not stand all the day idle, because no man has hired me.[t] Place me in what sphere thou pleasest, higher or lower, larger or narrower, only let me be some way serviceable to thy glory, and not thrown by as a despised broken vessel.

And in *this*, we must refer ourselves to God: Lord, send me whither thou pleasest, order me into what circumstances thou thinkest fit; make any use of me, so that thou wilt but make some use of me; let me have a place in the body, though it should not be a place of honour. Send me, with Jonah, to Nineveh; with St. Paul to Macedonia, to *help there;* to the highways and hedges, to pick up guests for the marriage, and I will cheerfully go. You must set out in the ministry, with an entire resignation of yourself to God: "He shall *choose my inheritance*, my employment, for me." Send me whither thou wilt, send me to a pulpit; send me to a prison, (and it is good to think of that, and to provide accordingly; we are not better than our fathers, nor know we what trying times may yet be before us,) I am ready to go, as St. Paul, bound in the spirit to Jerusalem: send me on what errand thou wilt, though ever so unpleasing to myself, ever so displeasing to others. Servants must go whither they are ordered, and do as they are bidden, and say what is put into their mouths, without murmuring or disputing, and so must we, as those who have no will of our own, but what is swallowed up in the will of our master, in all which we desire to stand complete.

And it is a great satisfaction to a minister in all his settlements and removals, to see God going before him, and leading him in a plain path; as it is his duty to pray for direction, and his wisdom to follow providence, and not to force it, to do the work of the present day and place, and leave to God what is to come: *Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord.* And if we see him setting before us an open door, we may comfort ourselves in this, that no man shall shut it.

(4.) Lord, give me *success*. *Send me*, and the message by me, as the rain and snow from heaven, which returneth not thither, but accomplisheth that for which it was sent.[u] Send me; and let the Spirit go along with me to make the word effectual, that it may not be as water spilt upon the ground; that I may not labour in vain, or spend my strength for nought. Those whom God sends, he sends armed with such weapons as are mighty through him, to the pulling down of Satan's strong holds.[v] O let me be furnished with those weapons! that I may see of the travail of my soul to my satisfaction.

*Lord, send me* to their hearts, let the word be quick and powerful for that purpose; send it between the joints of the harness; send it between the joints and the marrow;[w] send it, and let a divine power go along with it; send the report, and with it let the arm of the Lord be revealed;[x] that many may be brought to believe it, for it is the *power of God to salvation to every one that believes.*[y] O that it might now appear so, as it appeared when the *word of the Lord*, at first, *grew and prevailed so mightily*. How can we expect that our labours should be successful, and that we should profit the people we preach to, if we do not sincerely design it, and earnestly desire it.

But we must go forth in the strength of the Lord God,[z] or we shall go to no purpose. If we think to succeed in the strength of our own parts or resolution, by our own wisdom or importunity, we do but deceive ourselves; for St. Paul himself owns he can do nothing of himself, but *all things through Christ* strengthening him;[a] this divine strength we must pray for and depend upon, and by faith must fetch it in, whenever we have any work to do for God. And this is our comfort, that God's strength is often perfected, and most praised, in our weakness, for it is ordained *out of the mouth of babes and sucklings.*

Pray thus, pray daily thus, and you shall not seek in vain. If, when God calls to you to appear and act for him, you cheerfully say, *Here am I*, you may be sure, when you call to him to appear with you, and act by you, he also will say, *Here am I.* If you say, *Lord, send me*, he will say, *Go, and I will be with thee.* If you say, as Peter, *Lord, bid me come to thee upon the water;*[b] he will say, *Come*, and will keep you from sinking.

2. Going on in the ministry, we must remember WHOM we go for. *Who will go for us;* as agent for God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? Not that God has need of us, or of our services; he has angels at command ready to go on his errands, and to

s 1 Cor. xvi. 9. t Mark xx. 6, 7. u Isa. lv. 10, 11.
v 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. w Heb. iv. 12.
x Isa. liii. 1. y Rom. i. 16. z Ps. lxxi. 16.
a Phil. iv. 13. b Matt. xiv. 28, 29.

fly swiftly; but he is pleased to employ us, to bid us go for him. We go for God the Father, to bring the souls which he has made to him, as their chief good, and highest end; for God the Son, to bring the souls to him he has redeemed, as their Prophet, Priest, and King; for God the Holy Ghost, to bring the souls he has the charge of under his conduct, and his sanctifying power and influence.

Let us see how improvable this consideration is.

(1.) If we go for God, then we have no reason to be *ashamed* of our office, but to *magnify* it. Work for God cannot but be great work, and put honour upon them who are called to it. The preachers of a gospel, which, *to all that believe, is the power of God unto salvation*,[c] how much reason soever they have to think meanly of themselves, as unworthy of the honour, yet have a great deal of reason to think highly of their work. St. Paul, who went for God to the Gentile world, though for that he was reproached by the Jews, yet magnified his office.[d] The messengers of the churches are the glory of Christ,[e] how scornfully soever they are looked upon by the children of men. If we be not a shame to our office, it is well; we have no reason to be ashamed of it.

Ministers are not common messengers; they are ambassadors for Christ,[f] for the King of kings, and that is a high post of honour; in which though we pretend not, as ambassadors, to the title of *Excellency*, yet we ought to approve ourselves of an excellent spirit, and labour to excel in gifts and graces. And let not any think themselves too good to be thus employed, as if the lowest of the people were as fit to be messengers for Christ, as Jeroboam thought them to be priests to the calves; no, it is no disparagement, to the greatest, to go for God. King Solomon valued himself upon his being a preacher.

(2.) If we go for God, then we must *faithfully deliver his* MIND, *in his name*; and when we do so, we may speak as having authority. If we go on his errand, THAT, the whole of THAT, and THAT only we must deliver. Ezekiel must speak *God's words* to the people, and speak them *as his*; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.[g] We must deliver that which we have *received of the Lord*, and our doctrine must be *not ours*, but *his that sent us*.

Let this therefore imbolden us in our work, and give us a holy, humble assurance. *We* pretend to no dominion over you, we are your fellow-servants; but *he* who sends us, and whose mouth we are to you, claims dominion over you, and commands your obedience. He is the God who gave you your being; and therefore has authority to give you law, and will not suffer his authority to be slighted, or his crown profaned.

If we obtrude that message in God's name which is not his, and say, *Thus saith the Lord*,[h] when it is a false dream, fancy, or forgery of our own, we cannot speak with any confidence; (what is the chaff to the wheat?) but as long as we keep close to our instructions, we may rely upon our commission; and as far as what we say agrees with the law and the testimony, it demands acceptance, *not as the word of man*, a poor, frail, dying man like yourselves, but *as the word of God*,[i] for so indeed it is; the word of a living God; a living word that abides for ever.

(3.) If we go for God, then far be it from us, that we should seek ourselves and our own things. One of the first lessons Christ will have his disciples to learn, is to deny themselves, that they make him all in all. Self will be apt insensibly to steal into the study to us, and into the pulpit with us, and as far as it is indulged, the ends of our office are perverted, and our work spoiled, and stript of its dignity and power. We are ministers of Christ; and therefore must not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,—and [declare] ourselves your servants for *his* sake:[k] that the Lord alone may be exalted in our ministry, that he may be *all in all*.

We must not seek our own praise and applause, but must humble and abase ourselves; must not aim at the making and maintaining of any secular interest for ourselves,—that is prostituting what is honourable, and profaning what is sacred. It is a sad complaint which Paul makes even of the ministers of his time, that all sought their own, not the things that were Jesus Christ's;[l] I wish we have not all of us too much reason to charge the same upon ourselves; I am sure, we have all of us need to watch and pray against this sin. Ministers, of all people, must not live to themselves, nor please themselves, nor aim to enrich themselves; for thereby they contradict, and so depreciate, their office, which is intended to bring souls from self to God. None of us, if he lives like himself, lives to *himself*, but to the *Lord*.[m] Let self therefore be abased, and annihilated, that to us to live may be Christ,[n] nothing but Christ. We are friends of the bridegroom, and are unworthy the honour, if we speak one word for him, and ten for ourselves, when we ought to be entirely devoted to him.

(4.) If we go for God, then to him we must give account of our negociation; if you send your servant on an errand, you expect when he comes back, he should tell you how he has done his errand, and how he sped. The Lord of those servants that are sent for him, will come and reckon with them, what they have done, and what they have gained by trading with the talents committed to them. Angels give account of their messages; they run and return, descend and ascend; and ministers are hastening towards their day of account.

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c Rom. i. 16. d Rom. xi. 13. e 2 Cor. viii. 23.
f 2 Cor. v. 20. g Ezek. ii. 7. h Jer. xxiii. 31, 32.
i 1 Thess ii. 13. k 2 Cor. iv. 5. l Phil. ii. 21.
m Rom. xiv. 6, 7. n Phil. i. 21.

We must give an account of ourselves to God; it will be inquired into, whether we have faithfully delivered our message, whether we have declared the whole counsel of God, and whether we have not pulled down with one hand what we built up with the other. It concerns us therefore to do our work as those who know it will be reviewed.

We must give an account likewise of those to whom we have been sent; and a heavy account it will be if they perished through our ignorance, carelessness, or treachery. If the watchman warn not the sinner of his danger, the sinner shall die in his iniquity, but his blood shall be required at the watchman's hands. How pathetically did Augustus Cæsar upbraid the general, who, by his ill conduct, had lost him a brave army, *Quintili Vare redde legiones—Quintilius Varus, restore my legions.* Much more terribly will they be reckoned with, who by their treachery have been the ruin of precious souls. But how *comfortable* will the account be, of those who are the seals of our ministry, whom we have been instrumental to bring to Christ; as it was to this prophet, concerning some, of whom he said, *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me;*[o] though the generality believed not his report.

If we are sent for God, we must consider, as the prophet did, what answer we shall return to him who sent us;[p] as the servant who was sent to invite to the wedding feast, when he met with repulses and slights, came and showed his Lord all these things.[q] O that this thought might quicken us to the utmost care and diligence in our work, and that we might be found watching for souls, to win them over to Christ, as those who must give account, and who know not how soon.

(5.) If we go for God, then he will certainly bear us out, and stand by us, in all we do according to our commission. If we go for God, he will go with us; as he promised to go with Moses, when he sent him to Pharaoh. Those who are God's servants he will uphold; he will strengthen, according to their day;[r] he will plead their cause, and not suffer them to be wronged. Kings shall be made to know, that it is at their peril, if they do his prophets any harm.[s] Princes take injuries done to their ambassadors as done to themselves, and will resent and revenge them accordingly; and so does our Lord Jesus. *He that despiseth you, despiseth me.* Mocking God's messengers and misusing them, was once and again Jerusalem's measure-filling sin.

Ambassadors have their charges borne. God has provided, that as those who served at the altar might live, and live comfortably, upon the altar; so those who as his messengers preach the gospel, should be suitably maintained, that they may live of the gospel.[t] Yet sometimes the case is such, that ministers lose by their ministry: (the disciples left all to follow Christ, and preach the gospel:) but in that case, confide it to him to indemnify them; one way or other it shall be made up to them.

(6.) If we go for God, and approve ourselves true to the trust lodged in our hands, he will abundantly recompense all our services and sufferings. We shall not only be saved harmless, and have our losses made up, but we shall have God himself to be our bountiful rewarder, and our exceeding great reward. St. Peter encourages ministers, the under-shepherds, to feed the flock of God, and to do it willingly, with this, that when *the chief Shepherd shall appear*, they shall *appear with him in glory.*

The labours of a few days shall be rewarded with everlasting pleasures and riches; God will be sure to pay his messengers well; nor will he keep back the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down his corn-fields;[u] nor shall it *abide with him all night, until the morning*[v] of the resurrection; but when the sun of their life goes down, and the day of their service is ended, the labourers are immediately called to receive their penny; even those who came in at the eleventh hour, who died young, and so did but an hour's work, as well as those whose labours were long, and who bore the burthen and heat of the day.[w] St. Paul doubts not, but that when he departs he shall immediately be with Christ;[x] and in the assurance of it pleases himself with the thought, That he was now ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand; and thenceforth was laid up for him an abundant recompence.[y]

Encourage yourselves, brethren, and one another, with this word: you *go for God.* You aim at his glory, and make his work your business; you lay out yourselves in sincerity to advance his name, and honour, and interest, and his kingdom among men. And do you so indeed? *Though* Israel *be not gathered, yet shall you be glorious,*[z] and *a sweet savour to God, not only in them that are saved, but in them that perish.*[a] And therefore be of good courage, and lift up the hands that hang down; a particular account is kept of all your travels, toils, and tears in Christ's work, and they shall all be abundantly recompensed. *In due season you shall reap, if you faint not; be not weary* then *in well-doing.*[b] Hold out faith and patience yet a little while, and your warfare will soon be accomplished; only be faithful unto death,[c] and the crown of life is as sure to you as if it were already upon your heads.

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o Isa. viii. 18. p 2 Sam. xxiv. 13. q Luke xiv. 21.
r 1 Cor. x. 13. s Ps cv. 15. t 1 Cor. ix. 14.
u Jam. v. 4. v Lev. xix. 13.

w Matt. xx. 8, 9. x Phil. i. 23. y 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.
z Isa. xlix. 5. a 2 Cor. ii. 15.
b Gal. vi. 9. c Rev. ii. 10.

THE

# EXHORTATION,

AT

## MR. SAMUEL CLARK'S ORDINATION, AT ST. ALBANS.

(SOMEWHAT ENLARGED.)

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THAT which yet remains, before we part, is to address an exhortation, give me leave to call it a charge in Christ's name, to you, my dear brother, who have now dedicated yourself, and have been very solemnly dedicated, to the service of Christ in the work of the ministry; which I trust has left such a truly indelible character and impression upon you, that you will remember this day by a good token as long as you live; as the day in which your heart was more than ever fixed for God, as the Master you love, and resolve by his grace to live and die with; and your *ear bored to his door-post, to serve him for ever*; never to go out free *from* his service, but to go on more and more free *in* it.

Think you hear Christ saying to you, as he did to his disciples, when he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again: *Know ye not what I have done to you?*[a] I say, what Christ has done to you, for it is he who puts you into the ministry,[b] not we. Do you know, do you consider, what an honour he has put upon your head, what a trust he has lodged in your hand, and what a bond he has laid upon your soul? And will you not next consider, what he expects and requires from you, in consideration of this which he has done to you?

I hope you have such a sense of the excellency of the work to which Christ has called you, and its direct tendency to advance the honour of your Creator and Redeemer, and the true welfare of your fellow-creatures and fellow-Christians, that if we should now say to you, as Elijah said to Elisha, when he had cast his mantle over him, *Go, return, for what have I done to thee?*[c] you would reply as Ruth to Naomi, *Entreat me not to leave thee*, or to *turn from following after thee*;[d] for from the plough, to which I have this day laid my hand, I trust I shall never so much as look back.[e] *The Lord keep it always in the imagination of the thought of your heart, and establish your way before him!*[f] You have, as Jephthah, opened your mouth unto the Lord; and you cannot go back.[g] Go forward then, in God's name; go on and prosper, and the Lord be with you.

You have this day received a commission from the Lord Jesus, according to the true intent, and full extent, of the institution of the gospel ministry, to be an officer in his *army*, to train up his soldiers to, and lead them on, in all the services of the Christian warfare; to be an officer in his *kingdom*, to see that his laws be observed, his ordinances kept, and the peace and order of his kingdom preserved, for the honour of the prince, and the protection and welfare of all his loving subjects.

The apostles, prophets, and evangelists, were extraordinary ambassadors, employed to set the treaty on foot between God and fallen man: to them first was committed the *ministry of reconciliation*.[h] Pastors and teachers are, as residents or consuls, to carry on the treaty of peace, and to maintain all the branches of that commerce and communication between heaven and earth, which is founded upon it; their business is to negociate affairs between Christ and his church; they are *taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God*,[i] as the priests under the law were; that Christ may have the rents, honours, and services, which he

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[a] John xiii 12. [b] 1 Tim. i. 12 [c] Kings xix. 20.
[d] Ruth i. 17. [e] Luke ix. 62.
[f] 1 Chron. xxix. 11. [g] Judg. xi. 35.
[h] 2 Cor. v. 20. [i] Heb. v. 1.

was to receive from his church, and the church may have the favours and benefits which it is to receive from Christ.

Now, as the officers in a kingdom or corporation are commonly sworn to execute the office they are put into according to law; so you are this day sworn, as it were, to do the work of a gospel minister, according to Christ's institution.

It is therefore requisite that you rightly understand what the business of your office is, and what is the work that you are called to; that you may both prepare and apply yourself accordingly. I doubt not but you know it, and have considered it, yet I hope you will now give me leave to put you in mind of it, and myself too. This charge is given you, *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust*;[k] it is a great trust that is committed to you, and which you must shortly give an account of, and therefore it concerns you to be *faithful, by mercy obtained from the Lord.* You have accepted the trust, acquaint yourself with it, and be faithful to it, that you may in the great day give a good account of it.

I. There is a *trust committed to you, in common with all Christians*, and that is, your own precious soul. This charge therefore we are to give you, in the first place, which St. Paul gives to Timothy, *Take heed to thyself*, that thou mayst *save thyself*;[l] and to the elders of Ephesus, *Take heed therefore to yourselves.*[m] Those are very unfit to take care of other people's souls who are careless of their own; and to guide others in the way to heaven, who appear not at all solicitous to find the way thither themselves, or seem as if they had found some other way than that of strict and serious godliness, which the Scripture directs all to, and to which they direct others to; who, in another sense, must join with the spouse in her confession, *They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept.*[n]

Look well to the state of your own soul, and the terms on which it stands with God, and there make sure work about your calling and election; make it more and more sure to yourself, more and more evident, that you may be able to speak by experience, and then you will speak best, of regeneration, and the new birth; of union with Christ, and of reconciliation to God, and communion with God through him; may be able to say in some measure, with the apostle, *That which I have seen and heard, looked upon*, tasted, *and handled of the word of life, that declare I unto you, that you may have fellowship with us.*[o]

Look well to the frame of your own spirit; that you not only approve yourself a Christian indeed, but that you always maintain a Christian temper, and evidence it. You have made it appear to us at this time, that your judgment is rightly informed concerning the things of God; now, make it appear that there is a divine *heat* accompanying the divine *light*; for wherever the Sun of righteousness arises upon any soul, he brings both along with him; and our Lord Jesus, in those two remarkable operations of his upon the minds of his disciples, after his resurrection, his opening their understandings to understand the Scriptures, and his making their hearts to burn within them,[p] gave a specimen of what he would do for and in all his faithful ministers.

As we should labour to understand that ourselves which we would lead others into the understanding of, so we should ourselves be affected with that wherewith we desire to affect others; for the expressions of seriousness and earnestness are but affectation, further than as they flow from true affection. Let what we say come *from* the heart, and then it will be likely to reach *to* the heart. But whatever influence it has upon others, let us take care that it have a good influence upon ourselves, that we be leavened by it, and delivered into the mould of it; that one poor soul, at least, may be the better for every sermon we preach, that is *our own.*

I have often, with a great deal of pleasure, thought it a mighty advantage, which we who are ministers have above others for the keeping up of our acquaintance with heaven, and the carrying on of the interests of the spiritual and divine life in the soul, that the business of our profession is such as obliges us to be much in converse with the Scriptures, and the things of God, to *meditate on those things*, and *give ourselves wholly to them.*[q] And besides our stated devotions, in secret and in our families, which we have more time for than those have whose business lies in the world, we have occasion to be frequent in prayer with the sick, and the afflicted, and the families of our friends; and in good discourse with them: which if it be, as it ought to be, a *pleasure* to us, and we be in it as in our element, it will be something more, it will be a *profit* to us; and unless we be very much wanting to ourselves, will contribute abundantly to the prosperity of our own souls.

Yet this is not all: look well to the tenor of your conversation, that it be even and regular, and such as becomes your character; that by its evangelical tendency you may be preaching daily to those with whom you converse. It is not enough that it be blameless and harmless, and without rebuke, but your light must shine in every thing that is virtuous and praise-worthy. It is not enough for us who are ministers to say, none have learned *any ill* by us; but what *good* have they learned? It is part of the charge to Timothy, *Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*[r] It is not enough that we do not pull down

k 1 Tim. vi. 20
l 1 Tim. iv. 16.
m Acts xx. 28.
n Cant i 6.
o 1 John i. 1, 3.
p Luke xxiv. 45, 32.
q 1 Tim. iv. 15.
r 1 Tim. iv. 12.

with one hand what we build up with the other; but we must build up with *both* hands, both with our doctrine and with our example; then, and then only, are we burning and shining lights. The account we have of our Master is, Of what he began both to *do* and to *teach*;[s] which is an intimation to us, that our teaching and doing should be of a piece.

II. There is a *trust* committed to you *as a minister*, which you must be true to. Every servant in the house has his work assigned him; but the steward is not only employed but intrusted; there is more referred to his prudence and care than to the other servants: now the ministers of Christ are stewards of the mysteries of God,[t] and it is required in stewards that they be faithful; they are *rulers in the household*, under the Master, *to give them their portion of meat in due season*;[u] and in order to the due discharge of their trust, have need to be wise as well as faithful. Now when a steward enters into his office, it is usual to give him a particular account of the things put into his hand, and the trusts committed to him; the keys of such and such a storehouse are lodged with him, and he is to be accountable for what is in it, and what is given out of it. Perhaps Christ alluded to this, when he gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven,[v]—and, in him, to all faithful ministers who are intrusted to dispense the unsearchable riches of Christ, and that kingdom, according to the direction of their Lord, and for his honour.

When the Levites had *their hands filled*—as the Hebrew phrase is, for consecration—that is, had the charge of the sanctuary committed to them, and the parts and utensils of the tabernacles put under their custody, each of the three families had their part committed to them, and knew what they were to take care of, and account for: the Kohathites had the charge of the ark, the table, the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary; the Gershonites of the tent, the curtains, and hangings, &c. the Merarites of the boards, bars, pillars, &c.[w] Thus care was taken, that each should know his charge; and it is said, that *the instruments of the charge of their burthen were reckoned to them by name*;[x] that they might be engaged to the utmost circumspection in the discharge of their trust.

Give me leave, brother, in like manner to be particular in giving you an account of the holy things put into your hands, that good thing which *is committed to you; to keep*, not by any skill or strength of your own, but *by the Holy Ghost that dwelleth in us*;[y] and I hope you will not think we take too much upon us, if we *charge you, in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus, who, before Pontius Pilate, witnessed a good confession, that you keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ*:[z] and in the discharge of this stewardship, remember that our Master expects we should approve ourselves both faithful and wise servants, as those who, through grace, have both skill and will for our work.

1. You must, faithfully and wisely, explain and apply the oracles of God. You have declared, that you receive the Holy Scriptures as of divine authority, and the standing rule of your faith and practice, and as such we commit them to you, to be your treasury and touch-stone, the fountain whence you must derive your knowledge, and the foundation on which you must build your faith; for by them is the *man of God perfect*, accomplished as a man of God, and thoroughly *furnished for every good word and work*.[a]

The book of the law was committed to the custody of the priests;[b] and it is a very proper and significant usage in some churches, to put the Bible into the hand of ministers when they ordain them. That is one of the great things we commit to you. Keep the Bible as a sacred deposit of inestimable value, which being a light shining in a dark place, it is not strange if the powers of darkness level all their force against it, to corrupt it, to slacken the obligation, or lessen the reputation of it, to take it away from us, or, which would come all to one, to take us off from it to follow some false light. It is therefore given in charge to all Christians, but to ministers in an *especial* manner, To *hold fast that form of sound words* which we have in the Scriptures, in *faith and love*, and to hold to it. Let us be true to this trust, as faithful keepers both of the words and things contained in the Scriptures; as the Masorites, among the Jews, were of the *letter* of the Old Testament, who could tell how often each letter of the alphabet was to be found in their Hebrew Bible; and let us not come under the black character of those, who in the primitive church were called *traditores—traitors*, or *betrayers*; because, to avoid suffering, they gave up their Bibles to their persecutors.

In all your preaching, keep close to the Scripture; and fetch both matter and words thence. *To the law and to the testimony*.[c] It is Scripture philosophy, and Scripture oratory, that ministers must be masters of, and serve Christ and his church with: if they speak not according to that rule, it is because there is not that light in them that should be. You have a gospel to preach, not a gospel to make; and then only are faithful to your commission, when you strictly pursue your instructions, and deliver *all that*, and *that only*, *which you have received of the Lord*, in its native purity and simplicity, as one who dares not add thereto, or diminish from it, nor make any alteration.

Study the true and genuine sense of Scripture,

s Acts i. 1. t 1 Cor. i. 2. u Luke xii. 42.
v Matt. xvi. 19. w Numb. iii. 25, 31, 36. x Numb. iv. 32.
y 2 Tim. i. 24. z 1 Tim. vi. 13, 14. a 2 Tim. iii. 17.
b Deut. xvii. 18. c Isa. viii. 20.

by consulting the originals, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual; and rest not in Scripture words and phrases, without understanding the true import and intention of them, and doing what you can that those you speak to may rightly understand it too: for what will it avail us, *hærere in cortice—to worship in the outer court?* Paul, when he was a Pharisee, had his Bible at his fingers' ends, and yet owns he was *without* the law,[d] because he was a *stranger to the true intent and meaning* of it; and what does it profit *then?* Nay, if we do not take pains thoroughly and truly to understand the Scripture, we shall be in danger of handling it deceitfully, and wresting it to our own and others' destruction.[e] In plain texts, keep to the plain sense; in difficult ones, be modest and humble in your searches, and *keep to the proportion of faith,*[f] expounding them by those that are more plain.

Accustom yourself to a Scripture language; and labour to be ready, as well as mighty, in the Scriptures, that you may speak of divine things in the words which the Holy Ghost teaches;[g] for in those words they are brought with the most power, both to convince and to comfort. Do what you can, therefore, to make them familiar both to yourselves and to your hearers. Whence can we better fetch both strength and ornament to what we say, than from the Scripture?

In order to all this, I earnestly wish that the reading and expounding of the Scriptures were universally practised in all our congregations, as, blessed be God, it is in many. It has been, and would be, of great use to increase Scripture knowledge both in ministers and people; and some plain and obvious observations gathered out of a chapter in the exposition of it, might do as much to enlighten the mind, and direct the conscience, as a long studied train of arguments in a sermon. *Dulcius ex ipso fonte bibuntur aquæ—Water drank from the spring-head is sweet indeed.*

2. You must, faithfully and wisely, administer the ordinances of Christ, according as your opportunity is. Divine institutions are to be kept pure and entire, not kept *from* the church, but kept *for* it, and you are intrusted with the custody of them, and the dispensing of them, so as to serve the great ends for which they were appointed; both those which are common to all revealed religion, as the word, prayer, and the sabbath day, and those which are peculiar to the Christian economy, as baptism and the Lord's supper.

The preaching of the word is a divine institution, not only for the bringing in of those who are without the church, as if none needed to be preached to but heathens and Turks, but for the bringing up of those who are born within the church, as they come up to years of understanding, and the building up of those who are grown to maturity, who, as long as they are on this side heaven, need the constant preaching of the word, for the increasing of their knowledge, the refreshing of their memories, the assisting of their meditations and devotions, and the directing of their affections and conversations; besides the necessity there is of it, for the conviction and conversion of sinners, even in Christian nations: *I charge you, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom, preach the word, the* pure word of God; be constant, *be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine.*[h] Prepare for this part of your work; it is the wisdom of the preacher, still to teach the people knowledge; let him give good heed, and seek out, and set in order, many proverbs: let him study to find out acceptable, profitable words.[i] Manage it as an ordinance of Christ, instituted for the advancing of his honour and interest, and therefore preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord,[k] as one who has determined to know nothing but Christ and him crucified,[l] and desires to acquaint others with him. "Preach Christ, brother," said an aged minister, to one who asked his advice; "whatever you do, preach Christ."

Prayer is another divine institution, and you are to give yourself to that, as well as to the ministry of the word;[m] and this part of your work is as necessary to be done, and to be done well, as that. You must be the people's mouth to God, to declare all their concerns to him, as well as God's mouth to them, to declare all his counsel to them. And for this also you must prepare, by meditation and secret prayer, and acquainting yourself more and more with the Scriptures and your own heart, and the several cases both of saints and sinners. Know and observe the great intentions of this ordinance, not to prescribe to the providence of God, but to plead and put in suit his promises, to give him the honour due to his name; and to fetch in that grace, strength, and comfort, which he has encouraged us to ask and hope for in the name of Christ: keep this in your view in every prayer.

The Lord's day is a divine institution; the religious observation of one day in seven to the honour of God, is as ancient as the world; the fixing of it to the first day of the week, in honour of Christ rising from the dead, is as ancient as the Christian church; and the thing itself is necessary to the keeping up of religion in the world; and, therefore, study to keep up the honour of the Christian sabbath, that you may keep up the power of it; call it a *delight, the holy of the Lord, and honourable,* and teach others to call it so too.

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d Rom. vii. 9. e 2 Pet. iii. 16. f Rom. xii. 6.
g 1 Cor. ii. 13. h 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.
i Eccl. xii. 9, 10. k 2 Cor. iv. 5.
l 1 Cor. ii. 2. m Acts vi. 4.

The two sacraments, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, you are likewise intrusted with the administration of; and must therefore study the nature of them, and furnish yourself well with that which is pertinent and proper to be said in the administration of them, both in the word, and prayer, by which they are sanctified; and get your heart affected with the great things contained in those ordinances, that you may administer them not only so as to instruct, but so as to affect others also. And in your administrations have an eye to the institution; that is your warrant on which you must depend for your authority, and, therefore, that must be your rule to which you must adhere for your direction. *See thou do all according to the pattern showed thee in the mount.*

3. You must faithfully and wisely maintain and defend the great truths of the gospel. From the beginning, the gospel was preached with much contention,[l] and our Lord Jesus himself endured the contradiction of sinners; and the like must be still expected, till we come to that world where there is no pricking brier nor grieving thorn. The ministers of Christ are not only labourers in his vineyard, but advocates for him at the bar, to plead his cause; soldiers for him in the field, to fight his battles; and you must furnish yourself accordingly.

There are matters in variance among good Christians and good protestants, like those of old about meats and days, in which we must study mutual forbearance, humbly and honestly walking according to the light God has given us, and charitably believing that others do so too. But there is opposition given to the gospel we are the ministers of, by atheists and deists, Socinians and papists; against whom we must contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;[m] and to whom we must not give place by subjection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel may continue with us. In controversies of this nature, you must know how to handle your arms, and to stand to them, those weapons of our warfare, which, though not carnal, yet are mighty through God to the pulling down of Satan's strong holds;[n] must be able to give a reason of the hope that is in you,[o] and to convince gainsayers in meekness, and yet with all faithfulness, instructing those who oppose themselves.[p]

*Ordinarily*, it may be best, in your preaching, to handle the truths of the gospel as if they were never controverted; setting them before people in their true light and evidence, and rather obviating and anticipating objections than raising them; but still you must be furnished with answers, whenever there is occasion for them, to those who contradict. Know what to say, and be ready to say it, to those who question the being of God, and the dominion of his providence; who oppose the Scripture and divine revelation, who set up any other light and power in competition with it; to those who deny the Trinity, the Godhead of Christ and his satisfaction; and to those who advance the pope's supremacy and infallibility, who worship images, and give that honour to creatures which is due to God and Christ only: here you must put on resolution and holy zeal, and set your face as a flint. And never betray these great truths of Christ by a cowardly silence; but in things wherein the Lord your God is jealous, be you so too. Buy the truth, and sell it not. As you need not distrust your cause, so you need not distrust him whose cause it is; his advocates shall never want instructions, but if you humbly and honestly depend upon his assistance, and aim at his glory, it shall be *given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.*

There are some controverted things, in which we must be careful not to run into extremes; we must hold fast both the truth as it is in Jesus,[q] the truth which gives all the honour to Christ, and exalts free grace, and yet we must hold fast the truth which is after godliness,[r] the truth which strengthens our obligations to holiness in heart and life. The gospel does not make void the law, but perfects it. Duty must be done, and must be preached; but still Christ must be *all in all*, both for strength and righteousness. What *seeming* differences there may be between one Scripture and another, your business must be to accommodate them, not to aggravate them, for we are sure there are no *real* differences; and when we meet with difficulties that we cannot solve, let us abide by that which is plain and without controversy, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto us.

4. You must, faithfully and wisely, preside in religious assemblies; for as a minister, you are appointed to be one of the stewards of Christ's courts, and one of the masters of those assemblies.[s] The holy convocation is a divine appointment. Though every particular family and person, apart, might get the knowledge of God's will from his word, and praise him, and pray to him, yet he has ordained that Christians should associate at stated times for his worship, under the conduct of a gospel ministry: the Jews had their synagogues, which it was our Saviour's custom to attend in, with his neighbours, every sabbath day, to set us an example. Religious assemblies are appointed, for the glory of God and Christ, for the keeping up of the countenance of religion in the world, for the joint profession of our most holy faith and hope, and a joint concurrence in prayers and praises, and for the testifying and promoting of holy love, to be pledges of the communion of saints, and earnests of heaven.

God promises to Joshua, that if he will keep his

l 1 Thess. ii. 2. m Jude 3. n 2 Cor. x. 4. o 1 Pet. iii. 15.

p 2 Tim ii. 25. q Eph. iv. 21. r Tit. i. 1. s Eccl. xii. 11.

*charge*, he shall keep his *courts*:[t] these courts you are to keep, for *him*; in his name, and not your own; for his honour, and not for your own; and so as to answer the great designs of their institution. God's tabernacles are amiable, study to make them more and more so; his service reasonable, evidence that it is so. The assemblies of his people are both his praise and his pleasure; let us therefore preside in them, so that he may be both praised and pleased. When the sons of God come together, to present themselves before the Lord,[u] remember it is your business, as their mouth, to present them to him; both as learners at his feet, and supplicants at his footstool. And have this in your eye.

Let every thing in our religious assemblies be done decently, and in order, as becomes the solemnity of them; and nothing that is vain or light, that sullies the beauty of the service, interrupts the thread of it, or tends to distract and draw away the mind from it, be said, or done, or suffered in our assemblies; but let every part of the service be managed with that seriousness, and reverence, and due decorum, which becomes those that worship God in the Spirit, and know and consider who he is with whom we have to do, and what it is we have to do with him. So that if an unbeliever, or one prejudiced, should come in, he might see and say, that God is with us of a truth.[w] This charge therefore we commit to you, that you maintain the honour of religious assemblies; for that will redound much to the honour of Christ, who has promised to be there where two or three are gathered together in his name.

5. You must, faithfully and wisely, witness against sin, and carry on the holy war against it, for the suppressing of it, the breaking of its power, and the checking of its prevalency; for the Lord has sworn, that he will have war with that Amalek, that enemy to his church and people, that rebel against his crown and dignity, from generation to generation.[x] Every baptized Christian is an enlisted soldier, but every minister a commissioned officer, to fight under Christ's banner against sin, the world, and the devil. Your business, therefore, is to strive against sin; to strive against it, in yourself, in others, in those especially who are under your charge.

Bear your testimony against all instances of vice and immorality, all appearances of sin, and approaches toward it. That which is confessedly evil, and a violation of the law of God, faithfully reprove, and warn against it; that those who have sinned may be brought to repentance, and others may hear and fear. Here you must be *zealously* affected, as the angel of the church of Ephesus, that could *not bear them which were evil, and hated*, though not the persons yet *the deeds of the* Nicolaitans, *which Christ also hated*;[y] here the zeal of God's house should even eat us up, and make us so far to forget ourselves, as not to fear the face of man.[z]

The charge given to God's prophets, was to cause Jerusalem to know her abominations,[a] to show the house of Jacob their sins; and herein to cry aloud, and not to spare;[b] not spare those, not spare themselves. A minister is a reprover in the gate, a reprover by office, and, therefore, ought to speak as having authority, and to be bold for God; O that we were all more so! And had we but more boldness in the cause of Christ now, it would be a comfortable earnest to us of boldness in the day of Christ shortly. Some sinners must be rebuked sharply,[c] and saved with fear, plucking them out of the very fire.[d] And this consideration should awaken us to a holy zeal herein, that we have no other way of delivering our souls, but by warning the wicked man of his sin and danger. If we do not reprove our neighbour, we suffer sin upon him, and are in danger of bearing sin for him.[e]

In the difference that arose between Christ's disciples who followed him, and one who cast out devils in his name, but did not follow with them, Christ laid down this rule of CHARITY, *He that is not against me is with me*;[f] but in the controversy between Christ and Beelzebub, between holiness and wickedness, he laid down this rule of ZEAL, *He that is not with me is against me.*[g]

6. You must faithfully and wisely separate between the precious and the vile. It was required of the priests, that they should put a difference between holy and unholy, between unclean and clean,[h] and this was the condition of a prophet's acceptance with God, *If thou take out the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.*[i] Not that we must pretend thoroughly to part between the tares and the wheat, the sheep and the goats, in this world; that will never be done, till the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory; yet Christ has lodged with his ministers a power, according to the word, to *bind* and *loose*.

In your preaching you must distinguish, as the gospel does, that you may speak terror and comfort to those to whom they respectively belong, and may neither strengthen the hands of the wicked; nor make the hearts of the righteous sad, whom God would not have to be made sad.[k] The business of the steward, is to give to every one their portion of meat in due season; to every one that which is appointed for them, and is fit for them; and you must do so, by dividing the word of truth aright.[l] *Suum cuique—to every man his portion:* acquaint yourself with, and then accommodate yourself to, the state of the souls of those you preach to, that they may readily say, *This is for me, it suits my case.*

t Zech. iii. 7. u Job i. 6. w 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.
x Exod. xvii. 16. y Rev. ii. 2, 6. z John ii. 19.
a Ezek. xvi. 2. b Isa. lviii. 1.
c Tit. i. 13. d Jude 23. e Lev. xix. 17.
f Mark ix 40. g Matt xii. 30. h Lev. x. 10.
i Jer. xv. 19. k Ezek. xiii. 22. l 2 Tim. ii. 15.

In administering special ordinances, you must go by rule, and not lay them in common. Those who are ignorant or scandalous, and openly profane and vicious, ought not to be admitted to eat of the holy things now under the gospel, any more than they who were ceremonially unclean under the law. *Procul hinc, procul inde, profani—Far hence, far away, ye profane!* We cannot know men's hearts, but must be guided by a judgment of discretion, to do that which will be most for the honour of Christ and his institutions, and for the welfare of the souls of men.

7. You must faithfully and wisely comfort afflicted consciences. The great Shepherd gives the under-shepherds a particular charge to strengthen those of the flock who are diseased, to heal that which is sick, to bind up that which is broken, and to bring again that which is driven away;[m] from him therefore take this part of your charge. *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Zion.*[n] Among those who have spiritual senses *exercised*, there cannot but be some who are wounded in spirit; learn how to deal with such, how to pour oil into their wounds, and to bind them up. Those have indeed the tongue of the learned, who know how to speak a word in season to them who are weak.[o]

Learn how to deal tenderly with them, and with a spirit of meekness; putting your soul into their soul's stead; that you may heal their bruises, and yet not heal them slightly; may not add to their trouble, and yet may not show them the wrong way to peace. Their case is often difficult, and to be studied, but very pitiable, and not to be slighted.

Direct those who are of a sorrowful spirit, to fetch all their comfort from Jesus Christ, and to build their hope on him; show them the way to that city of refuge; and teach them not to look for that in themselves which is to be had in Christ only, that is, a perfect righteousness; not for that on earth which is to be had in heaven only, that is, a perfect holiness; not for that in the world, which is to be had in God only, that is, a perfect happiness.

If their souls refuse to be comforted, and they hearken not to you for anguish of spirit, yet do not give up their cause, but continue to speak comfort to them, and to pray for them; if indeed they be righteous, light and joy are sown for them,[p] and will come up again in due time; and we must wait for it, as the husbandman does for the harvest, with long patience. Remember it is a part of your charge, to be a helper of the joy of the Lord's people, and to be an instrument in the hand of the Spirit as a comforter.

8. You must faithfully and wisely intercede for the church of God, and pray for all the parts of it, and for the advancement of all its interests. God has set the watchmen upon Jerusalem's walls for this purpose, that they may cry day and night to him, and give him no rest until he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.[q] Receive this charge therefore among the rest, to pray constantly and earnestly for the peace of Jerusalem; yea, and for the welfare of all men, and the fruits of divine compassion to the *whole* world that lies in wickedness: for *so* extensive must your intercessions be, not only for all saints, but, in the first place, for all men.[r]

Public persons must be of a public spirit; which Christ intimated when he taught his disciples to pray, *Our* FATHER, as taking along with them all that can call God FATHER, even those to whom he is so only by creation. You are especially to bear Zion's concerns much upon your heart; as Aaron did the names of all Israel in his breastplate, when he went in to minister; hereby you must testify your love to the *whole family that is named from Christ*, and must keep up the communion of saints, and do your endeavour to enlarge the hearts of those among whom you minister, to a catholic concern *for all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both theirs and ours.*[s] As in our family worship we should pray for all Christian families, so in our public worship, for all Christian assemblies, which you, as presiding therein, have the charge of.

In times of desolating, threatening judgments, when the hand of God is gone forth against a people, it is expected that Aaron stand between the living and the dead, with his censer in his hand, to stay the plague; that the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep between the temple and the altar, saying, *Spare thy people, O Lord;*[t] that they beseech God that he will be gracious to us.[u] *If they be prophets*, says Jeremiah, *and if the word of the Lord be with them, let them make intercession to the Lord of hosts.*[v] If we cannot otherwise be serviceable to the public, we may and ought to be so by our prayers: and how much the issue of the struggle between Israel and Amalek in the valley, depends upon the constancy and faith of the intercessors in the mount, who hold up their hands to God,[w] we cannot tell; but it would be very sad if, by our neglect to pray for it, or by our formality and carelessness in prayer, the righteous, glorious cause of God and religion should languish and be lost.

9. You must, faithfully and wisely, transmit that good thing which is committed to you, pure and entire, to the next generation; you must not only keep it yourself, but keep it for, and leave it with, those who shall come after you, that one generation may praise God's work unto another. Timothy must commit what he has heard and received to faithful men.[x] That which was *commanded our fathers*, is

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m Ezek. xxxiv. 4. n Isa. xl. 1, 2. o Isa. l. 4.
p Ps. xcvii. 11. q Isa. lxii. 6, 7. r 1 Tim. ii. 1.
s 1 Cor. i. 2. t Joel ii. 17. u Mal. i. 9.
v Jer. xxvii. 18. w Exod. xvii. 11. x 2 Tim. ii. 2.

made known to us, that we may make it known to *our children*, and they to the *children which shall be born*, who shall *arise and declare it to their children*;[y] such care as this must be taken (and may the grace of God make it an effectual care) to preserve the entail of religion, that that light may not die in our hands, nor that treasure be buried in our graves.

We charge you with the *lambs* of the flock;[z] have an eye to them, a tenderness for them: the first charge Christ gave to Peter was, *Feed my lambs*; and the same charge is given to all the under shepherds, not only by the precepts, but by the example, of the chief Shepherd, who with a particular care gathers the lambs in his arms, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads them. If Christ have such a concern for them, he expects you should; and you may expect that, *therefore*, your concern for them shall not be in vain.

Lead them, therefore, into the green pastures, and feed them beside the still waters; lay before them *that* in the word of God, which is *milk for babes*; let your doctrine drop upon them as the rain; and labour to instil into their hearts, betimes, the pleasing, but commanding, principles of love to God and Jesus Christ, delight in the word and prayer, good thoughts of religion and the ways of God, and joyful prospects of the glory to be revealed, and every thing that may invite them, and win upon them, to set their faces heavenward.

In preaching, in visiting the families under your charge, you must be a teacher of babes, for Christ is so, and a very meek and compassionate one. The catechising of youth is a very good work, either publicly or privately, and if the blessing of God go along with you in it, it will contribute very much to the good progress and success of all your other work. Invite, encourage, and persuade those who are young, *to join themselves to the Lord* in the days of their youth, and to *subscribe with the hand* to be his;[a] and if we do our endeavours, though we should not gain our point, it will be a comfort to us to have been found in the way of our duty.

And now, brother, you see what the trust is that is lodged in your hand, and the ministry which you have received of the Lord Jesus. You hear your charge; what do you think of it? I doubt not, but you have considered it before you came under these bonds, and have already sat down and counted the cost; and therefore, I hope, the repeating of this charge, though you see how great your work is, and what difficulties you must expect to meet with in it, yet it does not make you repent your choice, nor wish yourself at liberty again; nor make you despair of going through with the undertaking. This use you should make of it, To be brought to see your own utter insufficiency for it, by any ability of your own. "Is all this to be said? *Ah, Lord God, I cannot speak it, for I am but a child*, unless God give me a mouth and wisdom. Is all this to be done? Ah, Lord God, I cannot do it, unless God *work in me both to will and to do of his own good pleasure*.[c] *Who is sufficient for these things?* Whoever is, I am not."

But instead of being disheartened by the greatness of your work, and the difficulties that attend it, you should rather, thereby, be animated and stirred up to set about it, and go on in it, with resolution such as becomes the Christian hero, the good soldier of Jesus Christ, who knows WHOM *he has trusted*, as well as *what* he is *trusted with*, and how to commit that again to Christ, which Christ has committed to him against that day.

Let me therefore say something in the close, both to quicken you to your work, and to encourage you in it, and not you only, but myself and other my brethren, who have laid our hand to this plough.

1. Let us propose to ourselves such considerations as are proper to quicken us to our work, and to the diligent, faithful discharge of the trust reposed in us.

(1.) The things we are employed about are of vast importance, and such as highly deserve our utmost care and application. Our business lies not in the little trifles of sense and time, in the merchandise of silver, or the gain of fine gold; no, it has reference to the upper unseen world, the world of spirits; to the future state, the state of retribution, and to this present state, only with regard to that. Let us often consider, that we are dealing for an eternal God, with immortal souls, about their everlasting state, and we shall see how well worthy our business is of the whole man. What an awful thought should *that* give us, which the apostle speaks, concerning the work of ministers, that they watch for *souls*.[d] It is no time to trifle, when there is a soul in the case, and its endless weal or woe.

Those who are concerned about the lives and estates of their *patients* and *clients*, have need to be both skilful and careful; much more should those be so who are concerned about precious souls, one of which is of more value than the whole world of inferior creatures. What greater care can lie upon a man, than the care of *souls*, which Christ purchased with his own blood, and thereby taught us how to put a value upon them.

Our business lies in the *things pertaining to the kingdom of God*;[e] (his kingdom among men;) concerning *those*, we have received instructions; and in comparison with those things, what are all the affairs of the kingdoms of this world, but children's play? It is the word of reconciliation that is committed to us, that word by which we must all be judged, shortly; and therefore we are concerned to be skil-

y Ps. lxxviii. 5, 6. z Isa. xl. 11. a Isa. xliv. 3, 5. b Jer. l. 6. c Phil. ii. 13. d Heb. xiii. 17. e Acts i. 3.

ful masters of our business, and faithful, careful ministers to it. We work for God; and therefore should see to it, that we do our work well. We work for Christ; who did his work for us with indefatigable industry, and did not fail, nor was discouraged, nor gave it up, till he could say, *I have finished the work that was given me to do.* Mr. Perkin's motto was, *Minister Verbi es, hoc age—If we be ministers of the word of God, we must mind our business;* for it is a *word* that will be a savour either of *life unto life*, or of *death unto death.*

(2.) Our Master's eye is always upon us, wherever we are, and whatever we are doing; whatever we say, whatever we think, he perfectly knows it, its principles, and all its circumstances. He sees us when we trifle, and do the work of the Lord deceitfully; when we offer the torn, and the lame, and the sick, for sacrifice, how plausibly soever it may be palliated before men. If we aim at self, and at our own praise, when we should seek the honour of Christ, he is acquainted with those corrupt glances of an eye that goes astray from him.

Now if God has such an observing eye upon us, we ought to have a jealous eye upon ourselves, and upon the frame of our spirits. God's servants need not do better than to serve him with eye service, because they are always under his eye; ministers who are more immediately employed *for* him, are more immediately observed *by* him. Those who execute the priest's office, are said to *walk before God.* O that we could thus walk before him, as always in his sight, that that consideration may not only restrain us from every thing unbecoming us, but engage us to go on in our work with the more cheerfulness and courage. As it is the terror of the slothful and wicked servant, so it is the pleasure and encouragement of the good and faithful servant, to be under his master's eye. If we take pains in studying, be constant and lively in prayer in our closet, he sees our *secret services* to his name, as he does also the secret *springs* of our public performances, which men cannot judge of; and if in these our hearts be right with him, and we approve ourselves to him, we may have the satisfaction of this, that HE approves of us; and then we may reckon it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment. He who judges us, is one who knows us, and we are sure that his judgment is according to truth.

(3.) Our time is very precious, and our day is hastening toward a period. When we see what a deal of work we have to do, and what a little time we have to do it in, we shall see how strongly we are bound, by a close application of mind, to do a double work in a single day, that our work may not be unfinished when our time is done, or (which perhaps may be much sooner) when our opportunity is done.

We cannot but be conscious to ourselves, that we have lost a great deal of time: how many empty spaces are there in our best days, and how many more in our worst? What a great deal more good might we have done to the souls of others, and got to our own souls, than we have, if we had been busy! Now though the time that is lost cannot be recalled, yet it may be *redeemed*, may be *bought back*, with a little self-denial and industry, in the improvement of the present time. Thus a spend-thrift, when he sees his folly, and begins to take up, knows he has no other way to recover his past losses, but by being so much the more frugal for the future. O that we would all learn this good husbandry, to be very sparing in our expenses of time, not to lavish away any of the precious moments of it in trifles. "An hour saved is an hour got," is a more valuable principle of good husbandry, than "A penny saved is a penny got."

We know not how little time may yet be before us, nor how soon, and how suddenly, we may be sent for home. Our commission runs, *durante bene placito—during pleasure;* and we may be displaced at less than an hour's warning; may be commanded away by death, or rendered useless by sickness, or may be silenced and driven into corners; or, some way or other, laid aside as despised broken vessels; and therefore, we should be quickened to work the work of him that sent us, while it is day, because the night comes.[f] Peter stirs up himself, to stir up others, and by preaching and writing to be a remembrancer to the churches, with this consideration, that *he must shortly put off this tabernacle.*[g] If Christians must exhort one another, surely then ministers must exhort *them, so much the more as they see the day approaching;*[h] the day of trouble, the day of restraint, the day of death;[i] and therefore, improve the day of opportunity. If we find death working in us, it concerns us to be so much the more busy in the work of life, and whatever our hand finds to do, let us do it with all our might; it will be time enough to rest when we come to heaven. It well becomes us to abide by that resolution, *Non propter vitam, vivendi perdere causas—Not for the sake of life, to lose the intent of living.*

(4.) If we obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful, there is hope that we may obtain this further mercy of him, to be useful. It is true, there are many who faithfully do their duty, and yet are disappointed of the success: they *toil all night, and catch nothing;* they labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought; and go in the bitterness of their souls because of this. But yet, if we do not the good we wish, we may hope that, through grace, we shall be instrumental to do *some* service to Christ and the souls of men; and the prospect of that should quicken

[f] John ix. 4. [g] 2 Pet. i. 13, 14. [h] Heb. x. 25. [i] Isa. liii. 10.

us to diligence. Our Lord Jesus was animated to go on in his work, with an assurance that he should *see his seed;* should *see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied,* and that the *good pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hands.*[k]

Let this, therefore, quicken us, that we know on whose errand we go, and carry a word that shall not return void. St. Paul was quickened by this consideration, that he did not *run as uncertainly,* nor *fight as one that beats the air.*[l] It is good work we are about, and we are not without hopes it may turn to a good account; that though we are the weakest and unworthiest of all our Master's servants, yet we may by his grace be instrumental to save some soul from death, to turn some sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; we may have some who may be our joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. By a holy ambition of such an honour as this, let us be spurred on to the utmost diligence and courage in the service of Christ. The more we magnify *our office,* though we have all the reason in the world to be ashamed of *ourselves,*[m] the more we shall think it worth our while to take pains in it.

(5.) We must shortly give account of our ministry; either with joy or grief, according as we are, or are not, diligent and faithful in the ministry. O that we were filled with this, and influenced by it, That the talents, put into our hands to trade with for our Master's honour, must be reckoned for; after a long time it may be, but at the set time.[n] And whether, upon inquiry, we shall be found among the good and faithful servants, or among the wicked and slothful servants, is now worth while to consider; for it is what our everlasting weal or woe depends upon.

Blessed Paul stirred up himself to the utmost care and diligence in his work, with a holy fear, lest while he preached to others, he himself should be a cast-away at last:[o] much more reason have we to quicken ourselves with such a consideration. We have souls of our own to save; and if we prove false to our trust, and the souls of men perish through *our* treachery and neglect, it will be a righteous doom upon us, *Thy life shall go for his life;* thy soul for theirs. We are watchmen; and ought to watch for souls, as those who must give account, and know not how soon. And woe to us if the blood of souls come to be required at our hand.[p]

Let us, therefore, be humble, diligent, and faithful in our work, and often calling ourselves to account whether we are so or no; and wherein we find we come short of our duty, let us judge ourselves, that we may not be judged of the Lord, and get our accounts balanced, by the satisfaction of Christ; then shall we lift up our heads, with joy in our hearts, when our Lord comes, and enter into his joy; when the servant, that because his Lord delayed his coming grew insolent and abusive, shall have his portion with the hypocrites.[q] That work had need be done carefully, which will have this serious issue.

2. Let us also furnish ourselves with such considerations as are proper to encourage us in our work, and to support and comfort us under the difficulties we meet with in it; that the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, may be strengthened and confirmed, and we may go on in our work, not only with resolution, but with cheerfulness.

(1.) We are employed in work, wherein God is working with us, and we are workers together with him.[r] Nothing could be more encouraging to those, whom Christ has sent to preach and baptize in his name, than that parting promise of his, *Lo, I am with you always,* you and your successors, *even to the end of the world.*[s] The tokens of his presence immediately appeared; for when the apostles went forth preaching, it was evident that the Lord was *working with them, and confirming the word by signs following;*[t] which was an early specimen of the lasting fruits of that promised presence of his with his church and ministers, which they are encouraged to depend upon.

If Christ have sent us, he is with us; and his word in our mouth shall not return void, but, as the rain from heaven, shall *accomplish that for which he sends it*[u] by us, whether it be sent, as Elihu says of the rain, *for correction, or for his land, or for mercy;*[v] and though Israel be not gathered, they who are faithful shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord;[w] and we shall be a sweet savour unto God in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved.[x] And if our labours have not the desired success, yet they shall have the designed success; our peace shall rest on the sons of peace; and if it find none to rest upon, yet we shall be no losers, it shall return to us again.

(2.) We shall find God's grace sufficient for us, if we be not wanting to ourselves in making use of it. It was with reference to the many difficulties and hardships Paul met with in his ministerial work, that Christ said to him, and in him to every faithful minister, *My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.*[y] He knows what measures of grace we and our work call for, and will be sure to give what is requisite; for not only all our supply is from him, but such a supply as is a sufficiency.[z]

If we go about our work in the strength of Christ, depending upon it, and deriving from it, we shall find, that as our day so shall our strength

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k Isa. liii. 10. l 1 Cor. ix. 26. m Rom. xi. 13.
n Matt. xxv 19. o 1 Cor. ix. p Heb. xiii. 17.
q Luke xii. 42–46. r 2 Cor. vi. 1.

s Matt. xxviii. 20. t Mark xvi. 20. u Isa. lv. 10, 11.
v Job xxxvii. 13. w Isa. xlix. 5. x 2 Cor. ii. 15.
y 2 Cor. xii. 9. z 2 Cor. iii. 5.

be, and we shall be enabled to do all things through Christ strengthening us;[a] all those things which Christ has appointed us to do for him. And the more humble the sense we have of our own insufficiency, the more confidently we may depend upon his all-sufficiency. Whatever charge is given us, grace is promised with it, to enable us to discharge it, if we will but by faith fetch in that grace as we have occasion for it, and make use of it. The Spirit of Christ was sent, to assist the disciples as ministers, to teach them who were to teach others, to lead them into all truth, who were to be the guides of the church, and to bring all things to their remembrance, as they had occasion for them; and it is a comfort to us, that that presence and power, that influence and operation, of the Spirit is to abide with the church and its faithful ministers always. If, therefore, we do not quench, and grieve, and resist the Spirit, and provoke him to withdraw; if we pray to God to give his Holy Spirit to us, as he has promised to give to them who ask him, and walk in the Spirit, and act in a believing dependence upon him; he will work all our works, in us and for us; and then, and then only, we shall be able to work for him.

(3.) We serve a Master, who, if our hearts be upright with him, is ready to pass by and pardon our many failings and defects. It is a great encouragement to all Christians, and to ministers particularly, that though our work be great and difficult, and our strength no way proportionable to it, yet we are under grace, and not under the law. The rule is strict, and we must aim at perfection in our conformity to it; but though in many things we come short of the rule, and cannot do so well as we should, yet if with a willing mind we do as well as we can, we shall be graciously accepted through a Mediator, and what is amiss shall be passed by and pardoned upon our repentance.

Let not this comfortable word be abused to the indulgence of our sloth and negligence, but rather let it quicken and encourage us in the service of such a God, with whom there is forgiveness that he may be feared.[b] Blessed Paul, the most active, zealous servant that ever our Master had, found cause to complain of a body of death he carried about with him, by reason of which he could not do the good that he would;[c] and if that which was his complaint be ours, that which was his comfort may be ours too, *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*[d]

It was a strict charge which Christ gave his disciples, when he sent them forth. But we find them defective in many instances; in their faith, in their humility, and in the diligence of their attendance on him, witness their sleeping in the garden; yet because they truly loved and honoured him, and believed in him, he not only continued them in his family, but favourably excused their infirmities, imputing them to the weakness of the flesh, while he *knew* the spirit *was* willing;[e] and praised them, at parting, for continuing with him in his temptations.[f]

(4.) We have many encouraging examples set before us, of those who, in their day, experienced the grace of God, and his consolations bearing them up, and carrying them on cheerfully in their work. Our fathers bore their testimony to the goodness of God, and the truth of his promise, and the power of his Spirit; they received the same charge that we have done; laboured under the same infirmities, and struggled with the same difficulties, that we do; and yet they were enabled to go on in their work, to persevere to the end, to finish well, and to give up their account with joy: and they owned to the last, it was by the grace of God that they were what they were, and did what they did; they were no better than that grace made them. Whenever they told us what God did for their souls, and what he did by their ministry, they were sure still to ascribe all the glory to free grace.

Now this is a comfort to us, that how weak soever we are, we have the God of our fathers to trust to, and depend upon; who did not fail *them*, and therefore, we hope, will not forsake *us*. He says to us, as he did to Joshua, when he was called to carry on that work which Moses had been long employed in, *As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.*[g]

We who have had our hands for many years at this plough, can assure you from our own experience, if that will be any encouragement to you, brother, that we have all the reason in the world to speak well—of our *Master;* he is our best friend—and of his *work;* it is its own wages. We have cause enough to be ashamed of *ourselves*, that we have done our work no better; but the *gospel of Christ*, which we are intrusted with the preaching of, we hope we shall never be ashamed of.[h]

(5.) Great will be our reward in heaven, if we be faithful. Though we can merit nothing at the hand of Christ, but when we have done all, must say *we are unprofitable servants*,[i] much more when we have done so little, nay, though there is so much sin and folly mingled with our best performances, as might justly cut us off from all hope of acceptance, yet, through Christ and his merit, we are encouraged to look for that crown of glory, which the chief-Shepherd, when he appears, shall bestow upon all the under shepherds who are faithful to him.[k]

Our Master himself had an eye to the *joy set before him.* And this enabled blessed Paul to triumph, when he was now ready to be offered, and the time of his departure was at hand, not only

[a] Phil. iv. 13. [b] Ps. cxxx. 4. [c] Rom. vii. 19. [d] Rom. viii. 1. [e] Matt xxvi. 44.

[f] Luke xxii. 28. [g] Josh. i. 5. [h] Rom. i. 16. [i] Luke xvii. 10. [k] 1 Pet. v. 4.

that his warfare was accomplished, and his toilsome course finished, but that thenceforth there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness; and not for him only, but for all those who love both the first and second appearing of Jesus Christ.[l]

Your success in your ministry will add to your comfort; the souls you win for Christ will be your joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord,[m] which should engage you to *aim* at success in your work: but though you should not be honoured with much of that, God will not be unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, and if but little encouraged here, it shall without fail be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

You must count upon sufferings. When Christ sent forth his disciples, he told them, not only what great things they should *do*, but what great things they should *suffer, for his name's sake*;[n] persecution and opposition from without, contempt and contradiction from within. Suffering ill for doing well you may think *hard* of, but must not think *strange* of; your Master is before-hand with you in his sufferings, and will not be behind-hand with you in his recompences; your journey may be tedious, and your voyage perilous, but hold out with faith and patience, you will be at home shortly, and one hour in heaven will make amends for all.

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l 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. m 1 Thess ii. 19. n Acts ix. 16.

# A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

## FUNERAL OF THE REV. JAMES OWEN,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN SHREWSBURY, APRIL 11, 1706.

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ACTS xx. 37, 38.

*And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him; sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more.*

MY text is a short account of the solemn farewell which was interchanged between St. Paul and the elders of Ephesus; and you see upon the reading of it, that it was a very mournful farewell: no improper subject, therefore, for a mournful funeral, such a one as we have now been attending. For what are funerals but our farewells to our friends? And this farewell in the text being pronounced by the Spirit of prophecy a final farewell, it was a sort of funeral.

And there is one circumstance of the story, which makes the resemblance the more lively and affecting; it is that which is added, (*v.* 38.) that *they accompanied him unto his ship.* For methinks, when we follow the remains of our deceased friends, who we trust sleep in Jesus, to the grave, and lodge and leave them in that close and dark cabin, we do in effect the same; we accompany them to their ship, so I would rather call it, than their prison, for the body, though confined to it for a time, is to pass through it to its glory. Let us, therefore, say concerning those whose earth we have committed to the earth, in hope of a resurrection to eternal life, that we have put them on ship-board; not to be tossed with tempests, for there the weary are at rest; but rather to be becalmed and wind-bound a while, till the embargo shall be taken off in the resurrection, and then, like the ship into which Christ was willingly received, it shall immediately land[a] its passengers in the desired harbour of endless bliss and joy. Or we will suppose, that we shut them up in such a ship as God shut up Noah in, not so much for passage as for preservation; in which they shall be safe from the waters of the flood, and kept secret till the appointed time comes for God to remember them,[b] as he remembered Noah;[c] and then they shall be brought out with joy, and led forth with singing, into a new world.

How does this alter the property of death and the grave! Let the thought of it, therefore, give us quite another prospect of them, than that which we are apt to amuse ourselves with. The sanctified soul, after it is delivered from the burthen of the flesh, goes immediately to joy and felicity, under a convoy of blessed angels; and the deserted body too is taken care of, it is shipped off in a very good vessel, under the protection of a covenant with the dust, which shall be remembered; so that it is sure not to be lost; it is dust which shall never be the serpent's meat, but shall without fail meet its soul again in due time, in the better country, that is, the heavenly, to be separated no more for ever.

In the account here given of this solemn farewell, it is observable, that St. Paul took leave of his friends with prayers, and they of him with tears. Prayers and tears are not only the church's artillery, with which her enemies, as there is occasion, are attacked and repulsed; but they are likewise a part of the church's treasure, with which her friends are enriched and entertained.

1. St. Paul, as became him, took leave of them with prayer; so he concluded his farewell sermon.

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[a] John vi. 21.

[b] Job xiv. 13. [c] Gen. viii. 1.

*When he had thus spoken*, with the utmost expressions of reverence and fervency, *he kneeled down and prayed with them all;* knowing, that what he had said to them would not edify them, as he desired, without the grace of God's working by it, he thus implored that grace. Being to leave them, in return for all their respects to him and his ministry, he thus left his blessing behind him, and a prophet's prayers will at any time amount to a prophet's reward.[d] He had told them, (*v.* 32.) he *commended them to God*, which he did effectually by this solemn prayer. If he must leave them, he will leave them in the best hands, and engage his gracious presence with them, who has promised never to leave nor forsake those who trust in him.[e] Our Lord Jesus concluded his farewell to his disciples with a prayer for them, (John xvii. 1.) and at last was parted from them as he blessed them.

Many a prayer St. Paul had put up for those Ephesians, which he gives them a specimen of once and again in his epistle to them; nor would he, after his departure from them, cease to pray for them.[f] This is one way, by which the communion of saints is kept up in their present dispersion. But this prayer he prayed with them, partly for their instruction, and the riveting of the things he had said to them in their minds; for which reason, in his epistles to the churches, he tells them particularly what it was that he asked of God for them, that they might study to answer the intention of his prayers, as well as of his preaching and writing; and partly for the alleviating of their griefs, which in this prayer he poured out before the Lord, and that, afterwards, they might reflect with some comfort and satisfaction upon this part at least of the sad solemnity.

It is good for friends to part with prayer, the rather, because when we part we are not sure that ever we shall meet together again; but here we may suppose, the duty was performed with the more affection, and warmth of devotion, because they knew it was to be the last prayer that blessed Paul was to pray with them: and it is very fit that at death we should take leave of our friends with prayer, because then we are to take leave of prayer itself; farewell prayer, and welcome praise, everlasting praise.

2. They, as became them, took leave of him with tears. They wept at prayer, and it was a very proper expression of their pious importunity. Jacob commenced Israel, a prince with God, when he wept and made supplication;[g] and our Lord Jesus himself, in the days of his flesh, offered up his prayers with strong crying and tears,[h] though he had no sin to lament in prayer as we have. They wept at parting with so good a friend. Paul had, in this discourse with them, more than once intimated how often he had wept over them; such was his tender affection to them, and hearty concern for their welfare; he had served the Lord among them with many tears, (Acts xx. 19.) and had warned them night and day with tears, *v.* 31. And now, in a just and grateful return for his love, they weep over him: for *he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*[i]

Let us observe on this sad occasion,

(1.) Who the mourners were. They were the elders or presbyters of the church of Ephesus, whom Paul sent for to attend him at Miletus, *v.* 17. It appears by the scope of the foregoing discourse, that St. Paul now, in the clear foresight, and actual consideration, both of his own death, and of the rise of heresies and sects thereupon, was deliberately and solemnly committing the conduct and government of the renowned church of Ephesus to the presbyters, or presbytery of that church, for a pattern to other churches; plainly telling all these elders,[k] and not any one more than the rest, than the Holy Ghost εθετο επισκοπους—*had made them overseers*,[l] or bishops of that church, and that therefore it was incumbent upon them to feed it; that is, not only to teach, but to rule it; committing the discipline as well as the doctrine of Christ to their ministration, without the least intimation of his doing it only *pro tempore—for the time being*, and with a purpose to alter the constitution afterwards. Accordingly, he charges them with the utmost diligence and application of mind, to set about the discharge of this great office, *v.* 28. *Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock;* and plainly intimates, that they must not any longer expect the personal residence either of himself as an apostle, or of Timothy as an evangelist, among them, nor depend upon them for any further particular direction in the affairs of their church; but under Christ, and in his strength, take the work into their own hands, and manage it according to the rules they had already received; *Take heed to yourselves. As the eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, and beareth them on her wings*,[m] to teach them to fly, as soon as she perceives they are fledged; so does St. Paul here, by these elders, putting some of his honour and spirit upon them, and exciting them now to do that themselves,[n] which hitherto himself or Timothy had done for them; and to make full proof of their ministry,[o] as hitherto they had under their direction made good proof of it.

Now though this was a great advancement to these elders, thus to come of age, and to be no longer under tutors and governors, yet they were so far from being pleased, or puffed up with the honour, that they fell a weeping at the thought of it; that they should never again have Paul to preside among them, and direct them. Thus the disciples

d Matt. x. 41. e Heb. xiii. 5. f Eph. i. 16.
g Hos xii. 4. h Heb. vii. 7. i Prov. xi. 25.
k 1 Tim. iv. 14. l Acts xx. 28. m Deut. xxxii. 11.
n Numb. xi. 17. o 2 Tim. iv. 5.

of Christ, though he told them when he parted with them, that greater works than he did should they do,[p] yet sorrow filled their hearts, because they should want the advantage of his bodily presence. Those know not their own weakness, and the peril that attends the posts of honour, who are ambitious to stand in the front, and lead the van, to carry the standard, or give the word of command among the soldiers of Jesus Christ. Since it is so difficult to rule well, it is very desirable rather to be well ruled.

But though the presbyters, or ministers only, are mentioned, as attending Paul at Miletus, yet it is probable that some of the people were with them, to pay their respects to that great apostle; for we find at another place, soon after this, that he was thus brought on his journey after a godly sort,[q] and accompanied to the ship, by all the disciples with their wives and children, *ch.* xxi. 5.

(2.) Observe how they expressed their sorrow. We read of nothing they said on this occasion; but,

[1.] *They all wept sore,* ικανος δε εγενετο κλαυθμος παντων—*There was an abundant weeping of them all;* so the phrase is, perhaps in allusion to that saying of the Canaanites, concerning the lamentation that was made at Jacob's funeral, *This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians.*[r] It was not one or two of them, whose spirits were more tender than the rest, that could not forbear weeping on this occasion, but they all wept; there was not one dry eye among them. Nor were they women and children who mourned thus passionately, but the elders of the church, who did not think it any diminution to their gravity, or dignity, in this way to give vent to their sorrows.

Our Lord Jesus was often in tears,[s] particularly at the grave of his friend Lazarus; and it is probable, his frequent weeping was that which made those, who fancied him to be one of the prophets risen from the dead, to conclude, that certainly he was Jeremias the weeping prophet.[t] Our way lies through a vale of tears, and it becomes us to conform to the climate: *Blessed are they that mourn,* that *sow in tears.*

[2.] They *fell on Paul's neck and kissed him;* signifying hereby how dear he was to them, and how loth they were to part with him. They took him in their arms, and laid him in their bosoms, to show how near he lay to their hearts, and that he was to them as their own souls. Thus they embraced at parting, as Jacob and Joseph did at meeting,[u] with all the affection that can be supposed, between the tenderest father and the dearest children. Could they have detained him in the cords of love, and with those powerful bands constrained his stay, he had not left them; but there is no remedy, he must go. He loves them well, and would gladly abide with them, but he loves his Master better, and must preach his kingdom in other cities also.[v] Yet they will make it appear, it is with the utmost regret and reluctance imaginable that they bid him farewell; their life they think is bound up in his.

See here one fruit of the gospel of Christ; as far as it took possession of men's hearts, it not only slew all enmities, but strengthened all endearments. If the followers of Christ showed themselves thus mutually kind upon all occasions, well might they say among the heathen, *See how these Christians love one another:* and by this would all men know, that they were the disciples of him, who loved us first.[w] O that this fruit might revive, might remain! How happy is it, where there is such sincere and flaming affection as this between people and ministers, between Christians among themselves, and ministers likewise one to another; for where love thus reigns, the God of love no doubt commands the blessing, even life for evermore.[x]

(3.) Observe what was the matter of their sorrow, it was chiefly this, because he had said, and had said it with an observable air of assurance, that they should *see his face no more;* which bid them to think that he was now ready to be offered, and that the time of his departure was at hand;[y] and for this sorrow filled their heart. He could himself finish his course with joy, it was a pleasure to him to think of it, but to them nothing could be mentioned more painful; this put him into a dilemma between life and death, Phil. i. 22, 23. The joy and gain set before him made death desirable, and yet the grief and loss he should leave behind him, made him, with a noble self-denial, willing to live.

Yet whether he was to die quickly, or live a good while longer, he does not inform them, only that they for their parts should *see his face no more;* this was the word which was as a sword in their bones. We have no reason to think, that St. Paul had any thing charming in his face above other men, it did not shine as the face of Moses did; but, on the contrary, we know that his bodily presence was weak and despicable; and it was probable, his visage, like his Master's, was marred more than any man's, furrowed with tears and toils. But it was not the show of his countenance that they looked at; they therefore loved to see his face, because then they were sure to hear his voice, and the voice of Christ speaking in him; then they were sure to have some spiritual gift[z] or other imparted to them, for their instruction and edification; but now they must never expect that privilege again. It is true, after this they might hope to hear from him by letter, and did do so, and his very enemies owned that his letters were weighty and powerful; they had likewise his other epistles to the churches, besides that to them-

p John xiv. 12. q 3 John 6. r Gen. l. 11.
s John xi. 35. t Matt. xvi. 14. u Gen. xlvi. 29.
v Luke iv. 43. w John xiii. 34. x Ps. cxxxiii. 3.
y 2 Tim. iv. 6. z Rom. i. 11.

selves, to consult and converse with; yet it troubles them to think that they shall never see him in the pulpit, never hear him preach any more; and though that which is written remains, yet that which is delivered *viva voce—with the living voice*, is more likely to *affect*; and we cannot but desire with St. John, if it may be, to *see the voice that speaks to us*.[a]

But why should they sorrow most of all for this word, that they should *see his face no more*? There was another thing which he had said, for which, in my mind, they had more reason to be sorrowful than for this; for he had told them, that *after his departure grievous wolves should enter in among them; nay, that some of themselves*, it should seem, he means some of these very men he was now speaking to, should arise and preach *perverse things*, to *draw away* the *disciples after them*, v. 30. For this, methinks, they should have sorrowed most of all, as the disciples of Christ did, who are said to have been exceeding sorrowful, when their Master told them that one of them should betray him.[b] But the truth is, the things of sense make deepest impressions upon us, and affect us most; we grieve for sin less than we ought, and for trouble more. Or we may suppose, that therefore they thus lamented Paul's departure from them, because this would be the sad consequence of it, which they hoped might have been happily prevented, if he could but have tarried with them.

However, that it grieved them thus to part with him, was both his honour and their praise.

[1.] It was his honour. It was a sign he lived in esteem among them, as one who did good in Ephesus, (as Jehoiada had done in Israel,[c]) that he went away attended with so many unforced, undissembled tears.

It is a mark of disgrace to depart without being desired,[d] and as an evidence of that, without being lamented, none to say, *Ah! lord!* or, *Ah his glory*,[e] but a branch of honour to be wept over, as Josiah was, and dismissed with the genuine and unbribed lamentations of those that are wise and good.

It is true, there have been those who have triumphed in the fall of the worthiest and best of men; when Christ's two witnesses are conquered and slain, the inhabitants of the earth will rejoice in it, and make merry;[f] their lives were their torment, and therefore their deaths are their joy; they who took away their lives, *cast out their names as evil*, that they might make the world believe they had done God and their country good service. And, probably, the mighty industry of the persecutors, to blemish the memory of the martyrs, might give occasion to their surviving friends so much the more to magnify them, and pay the greater respect to their names; even such as in after-ages degenerated (as good things are apt to do) into superstition. But the removal of virtuous and useful men, though it may be the sport and joy of profaneness and bigotry, will be the grief of all wisdom's children. Though Stephen was cast out of the city and stoned, in a popular tumult, as one not fit to live, yet there were found devout men, (who, it should seem, were not as yet professed Christians, but proselytes of the gate, hearty well-wishers to religion in general,) and those carried Stephen to his grave, and made great lamentation over him.[g]

St. Paul, for his part, was loaded as much as any man with disgrace and ignominy, wherever he went, and yet there were those of whom he was had in honour.[h] Thus did he pass by evil report and good report; some hated and vilified him, others loved and magnified him. Let none, therefore, be deterred from religion and godliness by the contempt put upon them; if they have their reproach, they have their praise: set the one, therefore, over against the other, balance the dishonour with the honour, and see the advantage unspeakably on religion's side; for the reproach is groundless and trifling, may be easily despised, and will quickly be rolled away, but the honour is just, and real, and weighty, and will last to eternity.

[2.] It was their praise. It is upon record to the commendation of these elders, that they thus lamented St. Paul's removal from them; it was a sign they loved him, and valued him, and had been edified by their conversation with him; a sign they judged of persons and things not by outward appearance, or according to the corrupt but common sentiment of a vain and inconsiderate world, that sits in darkness; but that they were governed by their believing regards to an eternal God, an immortal soul, and an everlasting state; for the sake of which they had this mighty affection and esteem for blessed Paul. A citizen of Zion honours all his fellow-citizens,[i] but the priests, and the Nazarites, those precious sons of Zion, are counted worthy of double honour: such was the honour those elders here generously and gratefully yielded to Paul.

We will, therefore, take it for granted, that these tears were truly pearls, pearls of great price, and that in them part of a just debt was paid to St. Paul now at his going away; and so we may

Observe, That the removal of a good minister from *us, is a thing to be greatly lamented by us*. Our parting with a faithful minister cannot but be, if we consider it aright, a very sorrowful parting.

I have already seen so many of the tears of this congregation upon this sad occasion, that I could not think of any subject more suitable, nor more pertinent to my purpose, than this. I wish I were able to improve the fair occasion it gives me, to ac-

[a] Rev. i. 12. [b] Matt. xxvi. 22. [c] 2 Chron. xxiv. 16. [d] 2 Chron. xxi. 20. [e] Jer. xxii. 18. [f] Rev. xi. 10. [g] Acts viii. 2. [h] 2 Sam. vi. 22. [i] Ps. xv. 4.

count for the justice of your tears, and to direct them into the right channel; to affect you with the providence you are under, and yet to reconcile you to it, and satisfy you in the will of God.

Had your aged pastor's voice (that least considerable of the qualifications of a minister) been but as good as his head and heart, now in his advanced years, and likely to have reached this great assembly, the work had been at this time in much better hands than mine;* but after all our endeavours, the best part of the work, even the sanctifying of this sad event to the spiritual benefit of every one of you, and the furtherance of the life of your souls by the death of your minister, must by faith and prayer be humbly left to a better hand than any of ours; even to that of the blessed Spirit, who worketh all in all.

Tears for the dead carry with them their own justification; when the body is sown in corruption, it is fit it should be watered; we are allowed to sorrow, even for those that we have reason to hope sleep in Jesus, and are only cautioned not to sorrow as those who have no hope.[k] The house where death is, is supposed to be a house of mourning,[l] and many a good lesson the man of wisdom will learn there.

But it is a particular case we are now to speak of, and to our grief it is a *case in faith*; it is that of a dead minister, whom we have special reason to weep over; and *oh! that our heads were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears*, for this purpose! Mourning for the dead, even for a priest when he died, by the law of Moses contracted a ceremonial pollution;[m] because that law could not take away sin, which is the sting of death, so that that mourning was then attended with a conscience of guilt unremoved; but the gospel of Christ having abolished death, and altered the property of it, and so enabled us to triumph over it, our sorrow for the dead is now so far from defiling us, that, if it be duly improved, it may, by the grace of God, become a happy means of our cleansing: God grant ours may be so upon this occasion!

I shall endeavour briefly to show, 1. Who it is, whose removal is to be thus lamented; and, II. Who they are, from whom it is justly expected that they lament it; and both from the text and context, as God shall enable me.

I. I say, it is a good minister whose removal is to be thus lamented. Shall I give you, in short, the character of such a good minister, as is worthy of this double honour?[n] Honour while he lives, and honour when he is gone? You here have lost one, who of his standing, was justly numbered among the first three, for eminent gifts and attainments, and a capacity of serving Christ and his church with them; but thanks be to God, a man may come far short of him, and yet be found a good and able minister of the New Testament; and not to be parted with without sorrow. We will, therefore, draw the portraiture of this good minister, by his interest and fidelity, not by his learning, or the arts and languages he is master of; and we will borrow it from the testimony of St. Paul's conscience here, in the preceding discourse concerning himself; in which he did not intend to magnify himself as some great one, but only to justify himself against his accusers, as one who had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

And here let me premise, (and yet, I hope, we are in this matter so manifest in your consciences, that I need not mention it,) that we abhor the thought of drawing into the character of a good minister, his being in every thing of our mind. Far be it, far be it from us, to monopolize Christianity, or the ministry, and confine either within the pale of our own particular opinion, in things that concern not the vitals and essentials of religion. We are not here seeking to advance the reputation of a party, nor appropriating the good characters to those of our own denomination; no, we take all occasions to protest against it, and while we walk according to what we have attained, endeavouring therein to approve ourselves to God in our integrity, we charitably believe that others do so too; and therefore we heartily love and honour good men, and good ministers, however, in the less weighty matters of the law, we differ from them in sentiment and apprehension, and practise accordingly; and we highly value all who cast out devils in Christ's name, though they follow not with us.[o] We have a spiritual communion with them in faith, hope, and holy love, we pray for their success, we rejoice in their usefulness, we would be helpers together with them, endeavouring as we are able to promote the common interests of Christ's kingdom, and the common salvation[p] of precious souls; we desire their lives, we lament their deaths; God forbid we should do otherwise, for without doubt, *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and should be approved of us.*[q]

Who then is that good minister, whose removal is to be thus lamented by us.

1. He is one, who having entirely devoted himself to the glory and honour of God, makes it his business to serve him. Thus St. Paul was among the Ephesians, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears.[r] You call us your ministers, and we are very willing to be so called, for we are your servants for Jesus' sake;[s] but we

* The Rev. Mr. Tallents, now in the 87th year of his age, and a constant preacher.

k 1 Thess. iv. 13. l Eccl. vii. 2. m Lev. xxi. 1.

n 1 Tim. v. 17. o Luke ix. 49, 50. p Jude 3. q Rom. xiv. 17, 18. r Acts xx. 19. s 2 Cor. iv. 5.

rather look upon ourselves as ministers of God to you for good; Christ is our Master, and he is a good minister who seeks his master's favour, consults his master's interest, and makes it his business to do his master's will and work.

Nothing is more essentially necessary to the making a man a minister, than self-dedication to the glory of God; nor does any thing go further to denominate a man a good minister, than to act in pursuance of that self-dedication, by a diligent and serious attendance upon God in all instances of devotion, and a wise, faithful, and zealous activity for him, and for the interests of his kingdom; studying by all means possible to do good to the souls of men, and to advance religion in the power of it. He who thus waits on his Master, by *waiting on his ministry*,[t] *shall be honoured*.[u]

He is a good minister who seeks not his own glory, but his who sent him;[v] who serves not his own belly, but the Lord Christ;[w] who aims not at the applause of his fellow-servants, but at his Master's acceptance; for if we please men otherwise than for their edification, we are not the servants of Christ.[x] He is a faithful friend of the bridegroom, who seeks the bridegroom's honour, and does all he can to engage people's affections for him, that he alone may be exalted. Let us be nothing, so that Christ may be *all in all*.

St. Paul was a great scholar, and a chief speaker; yet he reflects with more comfort and satisfaction upon the humility of mind, and the many tears, with which he had served the Lord, than upon the strength of his reasonings, and the eloquence of his discourses, with which he had served him. He is a good minister, and does good service to Christ and his church, who is humble and affectionate in the work of his ministry, though he do not excel in gifts. *Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth*.[y]

2. He is one who faithfully preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus St. Paul, though born at Tarsus, a Gentile academy, bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, a Jewish rabbi, yet in his preaching set aside all his learning, and testified the gospel of the grace of God;[z] pressed both upon Jews and Gentiles nothing else but repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.[a] Gospel grace and gospel duty were the subjects he dwelt upon at all seasons, both publicly, and from house to house; of these he kept back nothing,[b] with these he mingled nothing, ministering the gospel both pure and entire.

And he is indeed a good minister who makes the gospel his oracle, the gospel his touchstone, the gospel his treasury and storehouse, out of which he furnishes himself for every good word and work. Who dares not preach another gospel, nor corrupt this; knowing it is only a dispensation that is committed to him,[c] for which he is accountable; who delights not in preaching any thing but the gospel, knowing nothing so entertaining, nothing so edifying, as that great summary of the gospel, *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*.[d]

He is a good minister, who fills not your heads with airy notions, nor troubles your minds with matters of doubtful disputation, who affects not to gratify a vain fancy with fine speculations, or an itching ear with the enticing words of man's wisdom; but aims, by the plainness and simplicity of the gospel, to win your hearts to the faith and love of Jesus Christ. *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord*.[e]

3. He is one who cares much for the state of precious souls. Concerning this, St. Paul here appeals to the elders of Ephesus, that he ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.[f] His care was extensive, he had an eye to every one under his charge, high and low, rich and poor, to those who were his grief, as well as to those who were his crown; it was constant, he never ceased night or day, but filled up all his time, both of business and conversation, with that which tended to their edification; and it was very affectionate, he warned with tears of love, and tenderness, and holy fear, lest they should come short, and miscarry at last. Thus zealous was blessed Paul, for the edification of the body of Christ, not seeking his own profit, or secular advantage, but the profit of many, and their spiritual advantage, that they might be saved;[g] for upon that was his heart fixed.

And he is a good minister, who has a tender and compassionate love for the souls of men, trembles at the thought of their eternal ruin, and earnestly desires their eternal welfare; for the securing of which he would gladly spend and be spent;[h] who studies to find out acceptable words, by them to teach the people knowledge;[i] who, in his preaching and converse, aims and endeavours to make those with whom he has to do, some way or other wiser and better; who even *travails in birth again*, as it were with labouring pangs, to see Christ formed in them;[k] the height of whose ambition is, to be some way instrumental for the conviction and conversion of sinners, and the building up of saints in holiness and comfort; humbly subscribing to St. Paul's protestation, *We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying*.[l]

4. He is one who, by the grace of God, lives in some measure above this present world. This was St. Paul's rejoicing here, even the testimony of his conscience, concerning the temper of his mind, *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel*;[m] he never desired to be as rich, and look as great as his

[t] Prov. xxvii. 18. [u] Rom. xii. 7. [v] John viii. 50. [w] Rom. xvi. 18. [x] Gal. i. 10. [y] 1 Cor. viii. 1. [z] Acts xx. 24. [a] Acts xx. 21. [b] Acts xx. 20. [c] 1 Cor. ix. 17. [d] 1 Cor. ii. 2. [e] 2 Cor. iv. 5. [f] Acts xx. 31. [g] 1 Cor. x. 33. [h] 2 Cor. xii. 15. [i] Eccl. xii. 9. [k] Gal. iv. 19. [l] 2 Cor. xii. 19. [m] Acts xx. 33.

neighbour; he was perfectly dead to worldly greatness and gaiety. He had likewise the testimony of his friends, concerning the course of his life; they knew very well he was so far from aiming to get wealth, that he laboured in an honest calling to get bread, rather than be burthensome to them, to the prejudice of his ministry; *You yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities*, and not to mine only, but to *theirs that were with me*.[n] In his whole conversation, he discovered a generous contempt of this world, as became one who was so well acquainted with another world, and the great and everlasting things of that world.

And he is a good minister, whose life is in this, as in other instances, of a piece with his doctrine. Whose eyes are not dazzled with the glittering lustre of gold and silver, nor his heart drawn, or held, by the magnetic virtue of this earth: who seeks not yours for himself, but you[o] for Christ. Minds no high things, but heavenly things; no pleasure so much as that of doing his duty; no preferment in comparison with that of being accepted of God;[p] no business in competition with the business of his ministry. Who having engaged and employed himself in the affairs of another life, entangles not himself in the affairs of this life. Whose conversation is in heaven,[q] and in whose forehead, as well as his heart, *Holiness to the Lord* is engraven in legible and indelible characters. The apostles betimes taught gospel ministers the proper place for their worldly wealth, when they ordered the money that was brought them, to be laid not in their hands, much less in their bosoms, but at their feet.[r]

You see now who, and what manner of men, those ministers are, whose removal is so great a loss, and to be so much lamented. God grant that we all, who are called by this worthy name of ministers of the gospel, may answer these characters. How far our deceased brother did so, some of you know very well, and need not that any man should testify.

II. I come in the next place to show you who they are, who are concerned to lament the removal of such ministers as these, and what cause they have to do so.

They were the elders of Ephesus, elders in office, not in age, who here wept sore for the departure of Paul from among them: and they may be considered, 1. As ministers; 2. As ministers just setting out in the work of the ministry; and, 3. As, at this time, and upon this occasion, the representatives of the people or church of Ephesus. And so,

1. We who are ministers, are taught to bewail the removal of our fathers and brethren from us, and that we shall see their faces no more in this world. Even Paul the aged speaks of the recovery of a young minister, Epaphroditus by name, from a dangerous fit of sickness, as a very great mercy of God to himself, *lest* (says he) *I should have sorrow upon sorrow*.[s] Though he had as little need of the help of others, as ever any minister had, yet the death of Epaphroditus would have been a very great affliction to him, and would have added as much as any thing to his sorrows. Elijah lays very much to heart the death of the prophets, and himself being left alone, though he was so well able to stand alone.[t]

Let the priests, therefore, the Lord's ministers, weep on such sad occasions, between the porch and the altar,[u] mingling their tears with their sacrifices, and their prayers with their tears, saying, *Spare thy people, O Lord.* When the harvest is plenteous, and the labourers, the skilful, faithful labourers so few, our Master has appointed us to pray the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into the harvest;[v] and are we not to lament it greatly, when some of the most industrious of the labourers are called out of the harvest, when they could so ill be spared?

Our hands are this day weak; and by such providences as these, they are much more weakened. God is contending with us; our glory is waxen thin; the death of every good minister, (and we have parted with a great many of late, in the midst of their usefulness,) is *as when a standard-bearer fainteth; and* alas, *the rest of the trees of our forest are so few, that a child may write them.*[w] It is time for us, with the prophet Ezekiel, to fall down on our faces, under a deep sense of God's displeasure, and to cry as he did, with a loud voice, *Ah! Lord God, wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?*[x] high time to cry, *Help, Lord*, when *the faithful*, the faithful helpers, *cease* and *fail*.[y]

And by the sadness of our countenances upon such occasions as these, let our hearts be made better,[z] and let us be quickened with more care and diligence to work the works of him who sent us, while it is day, because the night comes, and before it comes, *wherein no man can work*.[a] Let us not only be true to our trust, but busy at our work, because we must shortly give account of our stewardship, and be no longer stewards. By such a providence as this, God speaks aloud to us, as he did to Moses, (Numb. xxvii. 13.) *Thou shalt be gathered to thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered. Whatsoever*, therefore, *our hand finds to do, let us do it with all our might; not counting life itself dear to us*, not being too tender of it, *so we may finish our course with joy*.[b]

2. The sons of the prophets are, in a particular manner, taught by this instance to lament the removal of their master from their head. And it will be a good sign that they are genuine sons, and will be a good presage of their inheriting a child's

n Acts xx. 34. o 2 Cor. xii. 14. p 2 Cor. v. 9. q Phil. iii. 20. r Acts iv. 37. s Phil. ii. 27. t 1 Kings xix. 10. u Joel ii. 17. v Matt. ix. 38. w Isa. x. 18, 19. x Ezek. xi. 13. y Ps. xii. 1. z Eccl. vii. 3. a John ix. 4. b Acts xx. 24.

portion of their spirit, if with a filial affection, they cry out as Elisha did, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.*[c] When Elisha had, in those words, erected a monument to the honour of his departed tutor, immediately he took up his mantle, and did wonders with it.

Those who are setting out in the ministry, or setting their faces toward it, have great reason to lament the removal of the elder ministers, especially such an one as we are now particularly lamenting, whom God had eminently qualified for the committing of the treasure of the gospel to some of the earthen vessels of the rising generation, and the putting of the light into their hands; who did, not only as a minister, *generare filios—beget sons* to Christ by the gospel; but as a tutor, *generare patres —beget nurses* for those children, and fathers to bring others to Christ. We cannot express the greatness of the loss of such an one, which they, in a special manner, have reason to be sensible of, who sat down under his shadow.

When John Baptist was beheaded, it is said, *his disciples took up the body and buried it, and* then *went and told Jesus.*[d] Let those do so who were brought up at the feet of this well instructed scribe. Go and tell Jesus that you are orphans, and take him for your guardian, with whom the fatherless find mercy, and who has promised not to leave his disciples orphans.[e] Resolve, that from this time, more than ever, you will cry unto him as your Father, and the guide of your youth,[f] and be assured he will never fail nor forsake those, who trust in the shadow of his wings.

3. The people that sat under the constant instruction and inspection of a good minister, ought to lament the removal of such an one from them. When our temporal comforts are removed from us, our relations, or friends, in whom we had sensible delight, or by whom we had secular advantage, our grief then has more need of a bridle than of a spur; but when those are taken from us by whom we had, and hoped for, benefit, to our souls only, then it is necessary something should be said to us, to make us sensible of our loss, and to stir us up to mourn for it; for this is an affliction, which, if not duly weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, we shall not be enough affected with; or at least the impressions of it are apt to wear off quickly, and are soon forgotten and lost.

Let me, therefore, show you briefly what reason you of this congregation have to lament the loss of a faithful shepherd, though, thanks be to that God, who graciously continues his aged servant among you, labouring in the word of doctrine, you are not as sheep having no shepherd. I have reason to think you are very sensible of the breach made upon you; I desire you may be so upon right grounds, that you may sorrow after a godly sort; that you may not, like children, cry for you know not what, but may be able to give a rational answer to such a question, as that which Joseph put to his fellow-prisoners, *Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?*[g] You may reply to that question with such questions as these:

(1.) Should we not grieve to part with a near relation, to whom we are joined in a close alliance? *Ah!* my brother, or *Ah!* sister; is mentioned as sufficient matter for lamentation, Jer. xxii. 18. And shall the bonds of kindred by blood and nature be stronger than those of kindred by the Spirit and grace? You have had fathers of your flesh, whom it may be you have followed to the grave, and you gave them this reverence, you lamented them; you would have reproached yourselves, as void of natural affection, if you had not done so; and will you not show this respect to your spiritual fathers, that thereby you may do honour to the Father of your spirits, and live.[h]

Ministers are yours, you have an interest in them, an interest by promise; *Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, are yours,* 1 Cor. iii. 22. (It was one of the last subjects your deceased minister preached upon among you; I hope you will not forget it; he told me of it when I visited him in his illness.) It follows, *or life, or death,* which may be understood particularly of the life and death of your ministers; their life is for your service, and their death too, if you make a due improvement of it, may be for your awakening and quickening, for whether they live or die, they are the Lord's,[i] and yours for his sake.

They are yours, for they are gifts which the exalted Redeemer gave unto men for the perfecting of the saints,[k] which he gave unto you to be your guides, overseers, and rulers; not to have dominion over your faith, we do not in the least pretend to it, but to be the helpers of your joy,[l] and nurses to the *new man* in its infancy, *till it comes to the perfect man.*

You see how nearly related your ministers are to you; they are appointed to be friends to your souls, and if, as you ought, you account them your best friends, it cannot but be a grief to you to part with them.

(2.) Should we not grieve to part with those who have loved us, and been kind to us? As we are bound in duty to lament the departure of our relations; so we are bound in gratitude to lament the departure of our benefactors; whom God by his grace has made blessings to us. Even the unthankful Israelites had so much sense of honour in them, as to mourn for Moses thirty days,[m] in consideration of the great things God had done for them by his

c 2 Kings ii. 12. d Matt. xiv. 12. e John xiv. 18. marg.
f Jer. iii. 4. g Gen. xl. 7.

h Heb. xii. 9. i Rom. xiv. 8. k Eph. iv. 11, 12.
l 2 Cor. i. 24. m Deut. xxxiv. 8.

hand; and shall we be less sensible of those invaluable benefits we enjoy by the mysteries of God, which ministers are the stewards of?

My brethren, we have nothing in ourselves to boast of, but a great deal to be ashamed of, yet, we hope, we can appeal to God as our record, how sincerely we long after you all in the *bowels* of Jesus Christ;[n] how dearly we love you, how earnestly we desire your spiritual welfare, how jealous we are over you with a godly jealousy; and as far as you have perceived this Spirit to be working in your ministers toward you, that must certainly be a grief to you, to have them taken from you. Do you lie so near their hearts, and shall not their departures be laid near yours?

There is something of a generous gratitude in these sorrows we are now calling for, such as well becomes those, who ask in sincerity, *What shall we render?* and would be found, as they are able, rendering according to the benefit done to them. Thus the memory of the just should be precious to us, especially theirs, who, by the grace of God, turned many to righteousness; thus should their names be preserved, and embalmed in tears. If for a good man,[o] a useful man, some would find in their hearts to die, to obtain a reprieve for them; shall not all find in their hearts to mourn, when they are past reprieve? Especially, since it is mentioned as a piece of gross stupidity, and a sad presage of approaching ruin to a people, when the righteous perish, and none consider it, or lay it to heart.[p]

(3.) Should we not grieve to part with those, who can very ill be spared, and that we shall certainly find the loss of? We shall see ourselves engaged to this, by a sense of interest, as well as duty and gratitude. The death of a good minister is a loss, a loss to you, and as such is to be lamented; a loss which, it may be, you are not so sensible of now, as you will be hereafter, when you will know that a prophet *hath been* among you;[q] hath been, *but now is not;* when you will wish to see some of those days of the Son of man, which you have seen, and may not.

Alas, says the true mourner, if we be bereaved of our ministers, we are *indeed* bereaved; we shall find more and more the want of their preaching and praying, their instructions of us, their intercessions for us, their prudent counsels, their faithful reproofs, their directing and encouraging examples; we may have another minister, but not such another; or such another, but not such another *to us;* it is well if the gap be not too great to be filled up. *Our soul desireth the first ripe fruits,*[r] but where are they.

It is a public loss, a loss to the town and country, to the land and nation; and public spirits cannot but bewail public losses. How ill can the church of God spare any of its good ministers! They are the chariots and horsemen[s] of the land; strip us of these, and we are naked and defenceless. They are our treasure: rob us of these, and we are impoverished. They are the burning and shining lights: put out these, and we walk in darkness. They are our glory and joy: take away these, and our pleasant things are departed, our songs are made to cease, our honour laid in the dust, and the crown fallen from the head, *Woe unto us; for we have sinned.*[t]

It is true, our God has the residue of the Spirit, nor is he tied to particular instruments; he can raise up a seed to serve him, as well qualified as those who went before; *instead of the fathers,* when he pleases, *shall be the children,*[u] and will be so, if their spirit descend and rest upon us; *with God all things are possible:* but, alas, we have not this hopeful prospect to give you; we who are risen up, come too far short of those who are gone, and going off, into whose labours we are entered, to be able to excuse you from deep lamentations of the death of your elder ministers, and from sighing out your Ichabod, *Where is the glory?*[v]

Is it nothing to you, then, all ye who pass by, is it nothing to you, that the gold is thus become dirt, and the most fine gold changed;[w] that we have reason to fear such an alteration in the house of our God among us, as was in the temple of Jerusalem in Rehoboam's time, when the shields of gold were carried away, and shields of brass were provided instead of them.[x] God look upon us, and prevent the fatal consequences of such a change as this! How far God may carry on his work by prerogative of power, even when he has removed such workmen, I cannot say; but this I am sure of, their removal is a very threatening omen, which we are all concerned to have awful apprehensions of.

It were now easy to draw a great many inferences from this melancholy subject; to reprove those who lay not to heart such sad dispensations, and much more those who rejoice in the extinguishing of our lights, because they love darkness rather; to encourage ministers to diligence and fidelity in their work, that they may finish their course with honour, as well as joy; to quicken and engage you all to a careful improvement of the labours of your faithful ministers, while they are continued with you, that you may not have tears for your own hardiness and unprofitableness, to mix with your tears for their removal; to inquire whether you have made a due improvement of the former afflictions of this kind you have been under, in the death both of good ministers, and good Christians, who have shone as lights among you, holding forth the word of life.

But it is time I apply myself more particularly to the sad occasion of our being together here this even-

[n] Phil. i. 8. [o] Rom. v. 7. [p] Isa. lvii. 1.
[q] Ezek. xxxiii. 33. [r] Mic. vii. 1. [s] 2 Kings ii. 12.
[t] Lam. v. 16. [u] Ps. xlv. 16. [v] 1 Sam. iv. 21.
[w] Lam. iv. 1. [x] 2 Chron. xii. 9, 10.

ing. Though it is not a Paul, it is not an apostle, we have now parted with, and are now lamenting; we compare not our fir-trees with the cedars of Lebanon; yet it is one who, I believe, was manifest in the consciences of many of you, to be a good minister of Jesus Christ, and one who had obtained mercy of the Lord to be found both skilful and faithful in that great work.

The earthen vessel, now a broken vessel, we have lodged in the dust, with the expectation of its being raised shortly a vessel of honour; and now, what improvements shall we make of this sad providence, and how shall we pay some part of that debt of respect we owe to the surviving name and memory?

Were this a proper place and time for me to express my own sorrow on account of this breach made upon us, I could not find out better words, nor more apposite and expressive to do it in, than those of David, when he lamented the fall of one, who had been dear to him as his own soul; *I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been unto me.*[y] If while I live I forget him, I must lie under the imputation of forgetting my own friend, and my father's friend.[z] A friend, with whom I have had an intimate acquaintance about seven or eight and twenty years, with whom I have many a time taken sweet counsel, and by whose conversation and correspondence, I either have been edified, or might have been; having always found him, not only well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,[a] but ready to distribute, and willing to communicate.[b] Such was the pleasantness of his life, and the distress by his death must be proportionable; *Lover and friend hast thou put far from me;*[c] *and my acquaintance into darkness.* In our lives we were not much divided, either in time or place; how far, and how long, we may be so in our deaths, he only knows in whose hands our breath and times are. God, by his grace, make me ready and willing to go after him!

But we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying;[d] that is my design, that is my desire; and I hope, by the blessing of God, it will be some way edifying to you, if, 1. I give you some short account of his character; 2. If I make some remarks upon his removal; and, 3. If I then briefly direct you to some of the work of this day in its day.

1. If I would expatiate upon his character, I have a very wide field before me, and am really sensible there is a justice owing to so good, so great a name. I confess I am not fond of making every friend I love and honour a *nonsuch*; it must be left to him, to whom all hearts are open, to put that into any man's character, that there is none like him in the earth;[e] yet, I think, that this is not to be deposited as common dust, nor his monument to be inscribed with common characters; and yet, as an advocate for his honour, shall only make that very reasonable demand, *Give him of the fruit of his hands, and let his own works praise him in the gates.*[f]

But aiming, as I said, at your edification, two things I shall suggest, which I think have a direct tendency that way, and may turn to a good account.

(1.) Let that be observed concerning him, which will furnish us with matter for praise and thanksgiving to God. And a great deal of reason we have to give thanks, not only in general, for all the saints and servants of God, who are departed this life in the *faith and fear of his holy name*; to the general assembly of whom, we are come in faith, hope, and love; but in a particular manner for those who have been in their day the lights of the church, and justly accounted fathers in it; for who is their Father? who but the Father of lights and spirits, *the Lord God of the holy prophets?*[g]

What we call the endowments of nature, a great genius, a solid judgment, a clear head, a strong memory, a quick fancy, a ready utterance, and the like, are all gifts from above; from his hand who formeth the Spirit of man within him. *The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord has made even both of them.*[h] All souls are his, even the greatest, the largest souls are so.

What we ascribe to industry, and close application of mind, attainments in knowledge, and a great compass of learning, God must have the praise of; for he it is that giveth men power to get this wealth, and it is not got by their might, and the power of their hands.[i] He it is that giveth the tongue of the learned, and who, in order to that, openeth the ear to hear as the learned.[k] He it is that lighteth the candles; and it is with a borrowed light that the church's stars shine, with a light reflected from the Sun of righteousness, that great light of the world.

It is to God, therefore, that we should give the praise of all those excellent gifts and graces, which we have observed in our deceased brother. Bless the Lord, who raised him out of a remote and obscure part of the kingdom, as a root out of a dry ground, to be so eminently serviceable to the interests of Christ's kingdom in his day, qualified him for service, called him to it, and signally owned him in it. Let us glorify the God of Israel, who has given such power unto men, and put such treasures into earthen vessels.

(2.) Let that be observed concerning him, which is proper for our imitation. What you have heard from him, and seen in him, that was virtuous and praiseworthy, transcribe it into your own hearts and lives, speak and do in like manner, and the God of peace shall be with you.[l] Those who were exemplary while they lived, should be made use of as

y 2 Sam. i. 26. z Prov. xxvii. 10. a Matt. xiii. 52.
b 1 Tim. vi. 18. c Ps. lxxxviii. 18. d 2 Cor. xii. 19. e Job i. 8.
f Prov. xxxi. 31. g 1 Sam. x. 12. h Prov. xx. 12.
i Deut. viii. 17, 18. k Isa. l. 4. l Phil. iv. 9.

examples when they are dead. It is required in general, that we be followers of all those, who are now through faith and patience inheriting the promises.[m] But particularly, that we follow the faith and holiness of those who have been by office our guides in the good ways of the Lord, considering the end of their conversation;[n] yet with this necessary proviso and limitation, that we follow them as they followed Christ,[o] and blessed Paul himself, that great example, was to be followed no further.

Here let all who know him observe for themselves, and preach to themselves; his children, his pupils, his familiar friends and acquaintance, let them recollect what they have taken notice of in him, that was fit to be imitated, and improve it for their own direction, caution, and quickening. I shall only mention two or three things, wherein I would, for my part, propose him to myself for a pattern, and endeavour to imitate him.

Marcus Antonius the Emperor, that great teacher and example of virtue, begins his celebrated book τῶν εἰς ἑαυτὸν—*concerning himself*, that is, his diary, with an account of the particular good lessons, or rules of conversation, which he learned from his parents, tutors, and others, whom he names with respect, who were the guides and companions of his youth. Were I to draw up such an account, I should be unjust to him, if I should leave him out of it, in whom I have thought these things, among others, well worthy imitation:

[1.] That he was a good husband of precious time; and that is a piece of good husbandry, which I am sure is good divinity. I have always known him to be an indefatigable student, and one who took so much pleasure in his work, both as a scholar, and as a minister, that one might see he accounted it not only its own wages, but its own recreation.

Even till his Lord came he gave a constant attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine, not neglecting the gift that was in him, but continually meditating upon these things, giving himself wholly to them; so that his profiting (even in his early days) appeared unto all men.[p] His Lord having intrusted him with five talents, he continually occupied the same, and traded with them, till, by the grace of God, he had made them five talents more. When he was sometimes urged to abate of the constancy and intenseness of his studies, in consideration of his health, he would say, "You must excuse me, I have but a little time to be working in, and I must be busy." *And seest thou a man* thus *diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings*, and *not before mean men.*

It was often observed concerning him, how uneasy he would be, when forced and kept from his studies by that conversation which was only entertaining, and not edifying, and with what pleasure, as soon as possibly he could, he would retire from it to his work; that he might fill up time with something that would turn to a good account, according as the duty of every day required. This is in a happy sense *living fast.*

[2.] That he was ready and mighty in the Scriptures, and made them above any thing his meditation. His large acquaintance with other learning, did not at all abate his value and pursuit of Scripture learning, to which all his other studies were made subservient. As he lived a Scripture religion, so he preached a Scripture divinity. Scripture language was his eloquence, like that of Apollos, who was *an eloquent man*, because *mighty in the Scriptures*;[q] Scripture reasons were his arguments, like the same Apollos, who *mightily convinced the Jews, shewing* what he taught *by the Scriptures.*[r]

Thus he came to be such an excellent expositor as you know he was; opening the Scripture by itself, comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and speaking the things of God, as they ought to be spoken, in the words which the Holy Ghost teaches.[s]

Thus he was furnished with milk for babes, and pasture for the lambs of the flock, witness his great dexterity in explaining the catechism; and with strong meat also for strong men, witness his solid and substantial discourses, in which he set before you the great things of God with admirable clearness, and in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.

Thus he adhered to the good old way, and testified the pure gospel of the grace of God, which exalts the Lord Jesus alone, as all in all, for strength as well as righteousness, and teaches us to cast every crown at his feet; taking all occasions to witness against those notions, which set up man's sufficiency in competition with Christ.

[3.] That he was a faithful and wise reprover of sin, and bold in bearing his testimony against it. Though you know, he was very courteous and obliging in all his behaviour, and not willing to make any man angry or sad, yet when there was a just occasion, he would admonish and rebuke with all authority, and yet with meekness and long-suffering.

Here he set his face as flint, and clad himself with zeal as with a cloak; as one who knew very well whose cause he pleaded, when he pleaded against sin; and how faithful and kind the wounds of a friend are, while the kisses of an enemy are deceitful; and as one, who believed there was a truth in Solomon's observation, which amounts to a divine promise, Prov. xxviii. 23. *He that rebuketh a man* for his faults with wisdom and tenderness, though for the present he may incur his displeasure for his

[m] Heb. vi. 12. [n] Heb. xiii. 7. [o] 1 Cor. xi. 1. [p] 1 Tim. iv. 13—15.

[q] Acts xviii. 24. [r] Acts xviii. 28. [s] 1 Cor. ii. 13.

plain dealing, yet *afterwards he shall find more favour*, and be looked upon as a better friend, *than he that flattereth with his tongue.*

[4.] That he was a man of true catholic charity; though no man was clearer in his own judgment, better understood the grounds on which he went, nor was better able to give an account of the hope that was in him with meekness and fear, yet he maintained an extensive charity for those from whom he differed, and a temper of mind toward them that was truly Christian, and became a follower of the Prince of peace, and a servant of the God of love.

As he wrote, he thought and lived: MODERATION was his VIRTUE, it was STILL his virtue; and it is not long since he took an effectual course to let it be known unto all men, as if he had foreseen that the Lord was at hand. And this is a virtue which has, and will have, its praise, with all those who know how to distinguish between the weighty and uncontested matters of the law and gospel,[t] *judgment, mercy, and the love of God*, and the matters of doubtful disputation,[u] such as the distinction of meats and days. This is the virtue, by which the unity of the Spirit is kept in the bond of peace; notwithstanding a diversity of opinion, and practice accordingly. The triumphs of this virtue over bigotry on all sides, will contribute abundantly to the peace of Zion's walls, and the prosperity of her palaces.

2. We are next to consider the end of his conversation,[v] ἐκβασιν—the *issue*, or *outlet*, of it. Having seen how he went on in the world, we are now to inquire how he went out of the world. Others had more of his life than you of this place had; but God sent him hither about six or seven years ago, to finish his testimony first, and then to finish his course among you; so that it is but a little time that you have had to improve by his life; God, by his grace, enable you to improve so much the more by his death: and a very improvable providence it is. It is a cloud mostly black and dark, yet not without its bright side.

(1.) We are here presented with a very melancholy and afflictive scene, which we ought to have very awful, serious thoughts of; something there is more than ordinary in this house of mourning, which the living should lay to heart.

To see a man so well qualified with gifts and graces for the service of Christ and his church, as he was; so well furnished, by the blessing of God upon the many years' hard studies of an uncommon head, with all sorts of useful knowledge; so inquisitive after more knowledge; and withal so communicative of what he did know. To see such a man thus taken away, in the midst of his serviceableness to his generation, when he had but little exceeded the fiftieth year of his life; though his strong constitution of body, and prudent management of himself, gave encouragement to hope, that though these treasures were in an earthen vessel, yet there were goods laid up for many years; and though his zeal and unwearied industry promised us a great deal more of public service, and that he should long be a blessing to his generation, yet to have the number of such months cut off in the midst, such a tongue silenced, such a hand withered, such a head laid in the dust, and at such a time as this, when it could so ill be spared: *What shall we say to these things?* What construction can we make of such a providence as this? We must have recourse to our first principles, abide by them, and resolve to hold them fast, and not let them go, how difficult soever it may be to reconcile some particular events to them. However it be, we are sure that God is neither unwise, nor unjust, nor unkind: he is not only an absolute Sovereign, who may do what he will; but a religious Ruler, who does no wrong to any of his creatures; a tender father, who designs no hurt to any of his children. However it be, yet the Lord Jesus takes care of his church, secures its interests, and the glory of his own name; which, whatever becomes of us, will endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven. Under the threatenings of providence, we must fly to the promises of the word, and cast anchor there; God knows what he is doing, though we do not; and we are sure dwells in perfect light, though as to us he makes darkness his pavilion. *Thy way*, O God, *is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters*; such as cannot be fathomed, connot be tracked; but we are confident of this very thing, that thou art *righteous in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works.*

Were we not certain that the soul is immortal, and that there is another life after this, we should be tempted to expostulate with our Maker, as the psalmist does, *Lord, wherefore hast thou made all men*, especially such men as these, *in vain?* So long in the making, so admirably well made; and yet so suddenly unmade, and so little use in comparison made of them? Such a living temple reared, and yet the people of thy holiness to possess it such a little while? Many continued who are the burthens of the earth, under which it groans, as sadly weary of them; and yet those removed who were the blessings of it, after which it groans, as sadly wanting them? We now are at a loss, and cannot expound such dispensations as these; but the resurrection of the just, and the glories of the future state, will solve the problem, and clear up this seeming paradox; *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;* when the mystery of God shall be finished. How those lights still shine to the praise of the Sun of Righteousness, which we count extinguished; and how these ser-

[t] Matt. xxiii. 23. [u] Rom. xiv. 1. [v] Heb. xiii. 7.

vants of Christ still serve him in his temple, the period of whose usefulness we are here lamenting, we cannot tell, nor how much to their advantage, the time that is lost on earth may be made up in heaven. Yet still, on us it looks black, and is a very sad presage; the Lord's voice by it cries in the city, cries in the country. God grant we may understand what it says, and may return a good answer, that our God may not proceed in his controversy.

(2.) Yet even in this afflictive providence, the grace of God presents us with something very encouraging and reviving to us; and that is, the great comfort and joy with which our deceased brother finished his course; which I ought to take notice of, to the glory of God, and for your instruction. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man*, though it be not always rapture and ecstasy, yet *it is peace:* the *effect of righteousness* will be *quietness* and *assurance for ever.*

I came short of being a witness of his translation, but those who were about him when he was taken up, saw with what a wonderful serenity and composure of mind he performed his dying work; that work which is to be done but once, and therefore had need be well done. He had often prayed for grace to finish well, and it appeared that his prayer was answered, and that the grace of God in him was not in vain; so cheerfully did he look the king of terrors in the face and bid his message welcome. Though he had as much reason as most men have, upon all accounts, to desire life, yet it appeared that to depart, and to be with Christ, was to him much more desirable.

The strong pain of the stone, (that *flagellum studiosorum—scourge of the student*, as it has been called,) with which he was frequently exercised, he bore not with the senselessness and stupidity of a stoic, but with the humble patience and submissiveness of a Christian, who had learned of his master to take up his cross. And when upon the continuance of a threatening and fatal symptom, he received the sentence of death within himself, with what ease did he take leave of the world, as one well pleased to think of being no more in it.

His solemn farewell to his children and pupils, the good counsels he gave them, the blessing with which he blessed them in the name of the Lord, and the testimony he bore with his dying lips to the good ways of God wherein he had walked, I hope they will never forget; and that particularly, they and we will ever remember and practise what he said, after many other good counsels, should be the last and great thing he would recommend to them, and that was, humility; "It is" (said he) "one of the brightest ornaments of a young minister to be humble."

The words of God which he had made his songs in the house of his pilgrimage, were his delightful entertainment when his tabernacle was in taking down. How pleasantly did he triumph then, in the words of blessed Paul, *I know whom I have believed, and he is able to keep what I have committed unto him against that day*, 2 Tim. i. 12.

When he was asked in his illness, whether he would have some of his friends sent for to keep him company, he answered, "My fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, and he that is not satisfied with that company, does not deserve it."

Another time, being asked would he not be glad to see his brother from Warrington, for whom he had an entire affection, he replied, "I know no man after the flesh; my elder Brother is in heaven, who is the first-born among many brethren." Thus he seemed to be taken up *with* heaven, before he was taken up *to* heaven.

Coming to himself again once after a fit, in which those about him thought him departing, he asked, "Have I not finished yet? I thought I should have finished now." Thus did he, with the sucking child, play upon the hole of the asp, and, with the weaned child, put his hand upon the cockatrice's den; knowing, that death itself cannot hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain, Isa. xi. 8, 9.

Overhearing his dear and affectionate yoke-fellow bemoaning herself, and saying, "*O this is a sad day!*" being the Lord's day, and some few hours before he died; he replied, with some show of resentment, "A sad day do you call it? No, it is not a sad day, I thank God; it is a comfortable day to me." And it was observed that he departed with a smiling countenance.

As he found himself drawing near to his end, he was ever and anon lifting up his heart to God, in such devout and pious breathings as these: "Blessed be God for Jesus Christ. How long, Lord, holy and true? Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." And not long before he departed, "Now let the blessed angels come and do their office."

Thus, my brethren, thus he finished his course; this was the end of his conversation. In such a heavenly temper as this he removed to the world of spirits, as one who was already acquainted with that world, and longed to be better acquainted with it. Blessed be God, who thus crowned his own work in him, and brought forth the top-stone of that blessed building with shoutings, and let us cry, *Grace, grace to it.*

Let this help to confirm our faith in the gospel of Christ, and to assure us that its original and tendency is divine and heavenly. That we see it furnishes the professors of it with effectual supports, and real solid joys, then when they most need them, and when all other comforts fail, and are insufficient.

The everlasting covenant, and particularly the promise of eternal life, you see is a fountain of living waters, which will refresh and make glad the heart, when all those things which the world offers us to be depended upon, and delighted in, will be dried up as the brooks in summer. I beseech you, sirs, build upon a foundation which will hold firm, when this deluge comes; treasure up comforts which will stand you in stead in a dying hour, and which will indeed make the clods of the valley sweet to you, *sit tibi terra levis—the very earth itself light to you.*

Let this encourage us in our Christian race and warfare, that those who have fought this good fight with courage and constancy, have had the comforts of it in their last extremities; and having run their race with patience, have finished their course with joy. Christ's faithful soldiers die not only in the bed of honour, but in the bed of peace and rest. Let us hereby be quickened to make our calling and election sure, for so we shall have, not only an entrance, but an abundant entrance, ministered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

3. I shall now close with a word of exhortation to you, my friends, who are here lamenting the loss of your faithful minister, that you may be sowing in your tears, doing your duty now you are bewailing your affliction. We will take it for granted that, like those Ephesian elders, you sorrow most of all because you shall see his face no more in this world; from that consideration, therefore, what I have now to say to you by way of counsel and direction shall take rise.

(1.) Now you shall see his face no more, thank God that ever you did see his face. When Job's comforts were taken away, he blessed God who gave them. Own yourselves indebted to the divine favour, for the setting up of such a burning and shining light here in your candlestick. There is a particular providence displayed in the removal and settlements of ministers. Be thankful for that providence which sent him hither, and that grace which, I trust, made him a blessing to you. Be thankful for what you have seen, and heard, and tasted of the word of life in his ministry, and that you have had reason to say, that God was with him of a truth.

Thank God for all the good ministers, whose faces you have seen to your comfort, and who were, in their day, the helpers of your faith and joy. Remember your guides, the guides of your youth, which have spoken to you the word of God; and remember to give God thanks for them, and for the good they were instrumental of to your souls. We do not desire you to build or garnish the sepulchres of the prophets, but here set up your Ebenezer to the honour of him who raised them up to you, saying, *Hitherto the Lord hath helped us;* helped us with good ministers, having never left himself without witness, nor you without helps for your souls, and directors of your way in this wilderness. Thanks be to God, we never knew the meaning of a famine of the word, the heavenly manna; though it has been often despised, yet has never been withheld.

Thank God for those whose faces we yet see, for the remnant that is left of the messengers of the Lord, and that when so many are removed into graves, the rest are not removed into corners. Though your pulpit be in mourning, thanks be to God, it is not empty. You of this place have particular reason to be thankful for the lengthening out of the days of your aged minister, and for the fruit he still brings forth in his old age. I pray God that your profiting, in proportion to that and other your advantages, may appear unto all men.

(2.) In the hiding of his face, take notice of the hiding of God's face, and look upon it as a token of his displeasure. Hear it as the Lord's controversy, and inquire diligently, and beg of him to show you wherefore he contendeth with you. It is not seven years since God removed one faithful good minister by death, (Mr. *Brian,*) who had long laboured among you in the word and doctrine; and now another taken away from the midst of you. Is not this an indication of God's anger? and ought not you to humble yourselves under his mighty hand? Let *our brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning, which the Lord has kindled;* and by serious repentance help to quench the flame.

It was certainly in displeasure to the people, that God silenced Ezekiel, and told him, he should no more be to them a reprover, Ezek. iii. 26. and you are now under such a rebuke. Now is a time for you to look into your own hearts, and to inquire what you have done to provoke God thus to break you with breach upon breach. Lay not the blame on others, but each of you take it to yourselves, and give your consciences leave to deal faithfully with you. It is sin that separates between you and God, between you and your ministers. Find out the sin that has done you this mischief, and mourn for that. Weep not so much for them who are gone, but rather weep for yourselves, and for your own sin and folly, which have forfeited the advantages you have lost. Ask seriously, have not I been a careless, trifling hearer of the word? Has not my heart gone after my covetousness, when I have come before God as his people come, and sitten before him as his people sit? Has not the word been unprofitable to me, not being mixed with faith? Has not my conversation been disagreeable to my profession, and my practice contrary to what I have heard, and been taught? Have not I left my first love, and is not that the reason wherefore the candles are thus removed, and thereby the candlestick itself threatened? How long has God come seeking fruit, but has found none, or next none? And therefore, though he has not

yet cut down the barren tree, he has in displeasure removed one of the dressers of it.

O let this providence awaken you to repentance, for your little proficiency under the means of grace; and set yourselves to mortify those lusts and corruptions, which have been the hinderances of your profiting; and have made your hearts like the highway, or the rock, or the thorny ground, under the seed of the word. It is said, that when David lamented Saul and Jonathan, he took care to *teach the children of Judah the use of the bow*, 2 Sam. i. 18. Which may be understood of the military bow; those great men being slain by the archers of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xxxi. 3. He endeavoured to make the men of Judah more expert archers, that they might revenge the death of their princes upon the Philistines. Let us meditate such a holy revenge this day, and resolve by the grace of God to be the death of our sins; finding them to be the death of our friends, particularly of our ministers.

(3.) Now you must see his face no more, recollect what you have heard from him, and seen in him, for your edification. Now this faithful witness has finished his testimony, will you set yourselves to sum up the evidence, and do it faithfully. Review what you have seen, and give what you have heard a rehearing, to better purpose than before. Call to mind the subjects he has preached upon among you, the good truths he has taught you, and treasure them up, that they may be ready to you upon all occasions. The people who attended the ministry of John Baptist, after he was dead, remembered what they had heard from him, and improved it for the assistance of their faith in Jesus Christ; *All that John said of this man was true.*

Remember, I beseech you, what you have received and heard, and hold fast, continuing in the things which you have learned. His last sermon, particularly, I hope you will never forget; when in the midst of his illness, God granted him such a reviving (which proved a lightening, as you call it, before death) that he thought himself able to preach. His love to his work and to your souls brought him hither. If it were to his own injury, as perhaps it was, let it be so much the more to your profit; live that life which he then taught you; get to be experimentally acquainted with that great mystery of godliness, which he then endeavoured to lead you into, from Rom. i. 17. *The just shall live by faith.* Live by faith now, and you shall live by sight for ever. Look back upon the years of his ministry with you, and the words you have heard from him which quickened you, never forget them. Now he must break the bread of life to you no more, *gather up the fragments which remain, that nothing may be lost.*

(4.) Now you must see his face no more in this world, seriously consider, how you will look him in the face in the great day. Believe it, sirs, that day will come, and we shall as sure see it as we see this: it concerns us to inquire whether we shall see it to our comfort, or to our confusion; whether it will be to us a day of trembling, or a day of triumph. It is certain, when our Lord Jesus shall come in the glory of his Father, he will be attended by the ten thousands of his saints. Enoch foresaw this, and foretold it. Among those holy myriads, no doubt, we shall meet our faithful ministers; and if we shall know any of our relations in this day, as I see no reason to think but that we shall, sure we shall take particular notice of those, who were sent to us as ambassadors for Christ, ministering the gospel of the grace of God. Nay, they will then be to give account of the souls committed to them, and of the success of their negociation; the servant who was sent to invite to the marriage, came and showed his Lord all the slights that were put upon him; and by the word which you now hear, you will then be judged, according as our testimony is or is not believed.

Think then, with what shame and confusion those will see the faces of their ministers in that day, who lived and died in an unsanctified, unregenerate state, whom Christ, by his ministers, long and often invited to light and life, but they refused, and persisted in their refusal, loving death and darkness rather, and so will their doom be. Their ministers then will be called to appear as evidence against them, and dreadful to the condemned sinners will such a testimony as this be. Lord, *we called* them, but *they refused; we stretched out our hands, but no man regarded.* We laid before them the terrors of the Lord, showed them his wrath revealed from heaven against their ungodliness and unrighteousness, but it prevailed not to startle and awaken them. We gave them warning, told them many a time what would be the end of their evil way, but they would not take the warning; we have delivered our own souls, but we could not deliver theirs. We invited them to Christ, and to the marriage supper of the Lamb; we told them often of the glories of redeeming love, the riches of gospel grace, the consolations of the new covenant, the pleasures of serious godliness, and the joys at God's right hand for evermore; but we could not win upon them, to give up themselves unto the Lord. *We have piped unto them, but they have not danced; we have mourned unto them, but they have not lamented.* How will this aggravate the misery of those that perish, and bring oil to their flames!

*But I hope better things of you*, my brethren, *and things that accompany salvation, though I thus speak;* the labour of your ministers among you, I trust, has not been in vain, and shall not be so. The apostle expresses, with a holy triumph, the prospect he had of meeting his friends with comfort in that day; *for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing*, which

we have our eye much upon in our present services and sufferings, *are not even ye*, not so much now in this imperfect state, but *in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?* O let us live so, that our ministers may thus give up their account of us with joy, for that will be profitable and comfortable for us. Then how sorrowful soever our parting with them is at death, our meeting with them again at the resurrection will be joyful; and under our present griefs, we may comfort ourselves and one another with the hopes and expectations of it.

Lastly, Now you must see his face no more, look more by faith upon the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. All flesh, you see, is as grass, and all the glory of man; the greatest eminency of gifts and usefulness, is as the flower of grass, sullied, withered, and laid in the dust; but the glory of the Lord in the word endures for ever, and is liable to no decay.

Our deceased brother, when near his death, hearing one who stood by say, "Alas! what shall we do if he be taken from us?" answered, "Be not concerned at that, *The* LORD *liveth.*" Trust therefore in the living GOD, and in him secure to yourselves living comforts. You change your ministers, but you do not change your Master. The law made them priests who had infirmity, who, therefore, could not continue by reason of death, and the gospel does the same; but the Lord Jesus has an unchangeable priesthood, for he is consecrated for evermore. The blessed Spirit is given to abide with us for ever, and in him our Lord is, and will be, with his church always, even unto the end of the world. When you have another minister, you shall not have another gospel, nor another Saviour, but still the same treasure, only in another earthen vessel. Let not your religion then die with your minister, not your faith, and love, and holy zeal be buried in his grave; for you are built not upon the apostles and prophets themselves, but upon their foundation, Jesus Christ himself, the everlasting foundation, and the chief corner-stone.

Keep your eye, therefore, upon the Lord Jesus, and set your hearts on him; rejoice in him always, and rely upon him, and that joy shall never be turned into sorrow, nor will that hope ever make you ashamed. Our candles are soon extinguished, and at the longest burn out of themselves, but the Sun of righteousness shines perpetually. *Walk*, therefore, *in the light of the Lord.* Cisterns are dried up, but the fountain of life is ever full,—ever flowing. You see the end of your minister's conversation, but *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.* To him I commend you all, and to the word of his grace; as blessed Paul did, Acts xx. 32. his mourning friends here; knowing very well, that that grace is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

# A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

# FUNERAL OF DR. SAMUEL BENION,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN SHREWSBURY.

TO WHICH IS ADDED, A CONCISE MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

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1 PETER i. 24, 25.

*All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever.*

SURE I need not remind you, brethren, you cannot but remember it, you cannot but be thinking of it at this time, that it is not full two years since we were upon a like sorrowful occasion met together in this place, to solemnize the funeral of a very able, faithful minister of this congregation, whose memory I hope is, and will be, precious among you, Mr. James Owen. If you and I had made a due improvement of that severe stroke, surely we had not felt the smart of this: but, LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, and men *will not see, they shall see.* If God judgeth, he will overcome. God grant, that this present dark dispensation of providence may so revive the impressions of that, as by both together we may be duly humbled under the mighty hand of God; that Elihu's complaint of old, Job xxxiii. 14. may not be taken up against us, *God speaketh once, yea, twice,* yet *man perceiveth not,* does not understand the meaning, nor answer the ends of what he says; or that of the prophet, that *the righteous,* as to our world, *perish,* and *no man lays it to heart,* or is duly affected with it; nay, merciful, useful, good men are taken away, and none consider it. O that we knew how rightly to expound, and that you knew how rightly to apprehend, such events as these.

He whom we have now followed to the silent grave, and left there, then followed with us, and was a deep sharer in our griefs on that occasion. But must the successor in the work of life so soon succeed in dying work too? All who go before us, say to us, as Christ to Peter, *You cannot follow me now,* because your work is not done; but *you shall follow me hereafter,* John xiii. 36. But here is one, who soon followed to the grave his predecessor in this pulpit; for death is not tied up to the rules of proportion, or due distances; every man must go in his own order, the order appointed by him in whose hand our times are.

Considering age, and bodily strength and vigour, we who are ministers must think, that he whom we have now laid in the dust was, a few days ago, likely enough, in a course of nature, to have seen most of us laid there. I thought concerning him,—This is the Joseph, that shall put his hand on my eyes, Gen. xlvi. 4. and do that office for me, which I am now doing for him: but living and dying, it seems, do not go by livelihoods: the Sovereign Lord of life has ordained otherwise, and the number of his months (which were far from being months of vanity) are cut off in the midst.

Now, what shall we say to these things? *What is this that God hath done unto us?* For my part, I am quite at a loss, am full of confusion, and know not what to say. The tidings astonished me, and made me cry out to God, as the prophet did, Ezek. xi. 13. *Ah! Lord God! wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?* But what shall I say to you? I wish I were better able to perform this service which your aged pastor has called me to. How to order the course before you I know not, and yet something I must say, both as a mourner with you, and as a monitor to you, that I might both soften the ground, and break it up.

I have something to say as a mourner with you: I am willing to hope you have no need to raise up

your mourning, of singing men, or singing women, to move your passions; you are sensible of your loss, and here is a grievous mourning for it; we are lamenting one, that I perceive is universally lamented, and have the tears of many mingled with ours on this occasion. But my business will be, to show you what reason we have thus to lay to heart this breach made upon us, that we may be able to give a good answer to that question, which, whenever we are of a sorrowful countenance, we should put to ourselves, *Wherefore look we so sadly to-day? Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* That if there be no good reason for the grief, we may dismiss it; if there be, we may direct it aright.

For my own part, I have all the reason in the world to bewail the loss of a very dear and affectionate friend, with whom I have many a time taken sweet counsel. You, for your part, have reason to bewail the loss of an able, faithful minister, from whom you have many a time received good counsel. And that we have of late lost so many such, cannot but aggravate the grief. *O that our heads were waters, and our eyes fountains of tears*, that we might sorrow after a godly sort; not for them who are gone; if we loved them we should rejoice rather in their joy, that joy of their LORD, into which they are entered; but for ourselves, and for our children, who are left behind: and God give us grace to sow now in these tears for them, that we may hereafter reap in joy with them. And the truth is, as there are none of the afflictions of this present time that has more in them to justify our grief, nor over which we may more safely say, *We do well to mourn*, than the death of good people and good ministers; so there are none that (when the matter is considered entirely) has more in them to qualify our grief, and to balance it; for to them, whom to live was Christ, to die is gain, everlasting gain. By St. Stephen's death the church lost a minister, and therefore, justly, when they carried him to his burial, made great lamentation over him, which well became devout men, Acts viii. 2. and is recorded for our imitation; yet, at the same time, it gained a martyr. And, *if I be offered* (says St. Paul) *upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice*, not only myself, for my crown, but *with you all*, for the benefit which may accrue to you thereby.

The wise man recommends it to us as an excellent means of increase in wisdom, to frequent the house of mourning, and to accommodate ourselves to the temper of it: there (says he) *the heart of the wise is*, and there it learns many a good lesson, while the heart of fools is in the house of mirth, and there learns many a bad one. Two houses of mourning this death, this so great a death, calls us to. Go to the house whence we fetched those dear remains we have now laid by, or laid up rather, in the dust, and that is a house of mourning for its father, for its master, who was every way its glory and blessing; this is a more common case, and what occurs often; but besides that, here is another house of mourning, this place of your religious assemblies is so. The gates of the daughter of Sion are covered with a cloud; and justly, when one of the masters of the assembly is removed, his light to be seen, and his voice to be heard, no more among them. We find it made the character of those whom God will gather, gather with everlasting loving-kindness, that they are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, and that to them the reproach of it is a burthen. When the solemn assembly is thus deprived of its guides and glories, one after another, and broken with breach upon breach, all who wish well to it ought to be sorrowful: and coming thus from one house of mourning to another, we are inexcusable, if by both together some good impressions be not made upon our souls, which will abide and command there, and if by the sadness of the countenance our hearts be not made some way better, God by his grace make them every way better.

I must say something also as a monitor to you; for the business of your watchmen is to give you warning, which you are to take at your peril. Believe it, sirs, this rod has a voice, a loud voice; whether you perceive it or no, the man of wisdom will. That you therefore may approve yourselves wisdom's children, *hear ye the Lord's controversy*, and send us not to plead it with the rocks and the mountains, to as much purpose as with you; for a hearing it will have, whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear. You are called to hearken to the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war; for when ambassadors are recalled, heralds are sent: none of you, I hope, have said, *We will not hearken.*

God has a controversy with you of this place, of this congregation, from the head of which two such eminently useful men have been removed in so short a time, in both of whom you thought you had goods laid up for many years. He has a controversy with us who are ministers; for hereby our hands are very much weakened, and our glory is waxen thin. Lord, *show us wherefore thou contendest with us.* It highly concerns us, I am sure, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, which is gone forth against us, and by earnest prayers to stand in the gap, at which our glory seems to be going out, and our ruin to be breaking in, that we may make good the breach. The putting out of our candles is a bad omen of the removal of our candlestick; it is, at least, a call to us, to remember whence we are fallen, and repent, lest it be removed. We know what our sins have deserved, and what Providence threatens us with, and are concerned to meet God in the way of his judgments; in such a day as this, he may well wonder if there be no intercessor; for even the Jews themselves, when our Saviour spoke of taking the

vineyard from them, and giving it to others, startled at the very mention of it, saying, *God forbid.*[a] And shall we be less solicitous about privileges more precious?

The text I have read to you, will lead us both to the lamentations we have to make, and to the admonitions we have to give, on this solemn occasion.

1. In the places from which it is quoted, it is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, who, that he might prepare the way of the Lord, even in the desert, is ordered to proclaim this, *All flesh is grass*, &c. Isa. xl. 6—8. I need not tell you, John Baptist was that voice;[b] it is his testimony concerning himself, and a modest testimony. He was only the voice, God was the speaker. And I am apt to think, that as John was the voice crying, so he was the grass that was to wither, and the flower that was to fade, which he was to give notice of, that the people, which mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not,[c] might be satisfied he was only his forerunner; for all his glory was to be done away, and would be no glory, in comparison with the glory of the Messiah, which excelled, and would remain. John's ministry and baptism soon came to an end, and gave way to him who was to come. He himself spoke of it to his disciples, when they were jealous of the growing honour of our Lord Jesus, and he spoke it with all possible satisfaction, *He must increase, but I must decrease.*[d] And Christ speaks of John's being but for a season, a burning and shining light.[e] His office was *pro tempore—for the time being*, an introduction of good things to come, and his brightness like the morning star, which disappears when the sun rises. This grass began to wither about eighteen or nineteen months after his first showing unto Israel, when he was cast into prison by Herod, and was quite cut down, some time after, when he was beheaded: and his baptism did not long survive him, but his followers soon became the followers of Christ, to whom he had justly and generously consigned them, and turned them over.

Ministers, who, like John Baptist, are friends and servants of the bridegroom, like him must wither as grass, and all their glory fade. But Christ their Master, the *Word of the Lord*, the essential, eternal Word, *endureth for ever*, the *Word of life.*[f] For though he also, like John Baptist, was cut off in the midst of his week,[g] yet he rose again, rose to die no more; *Death has no more*, no longer, *dominion over* him. And *of him it is witnessed that he liveth.*[h] This is he who by the gospel is preached unto us, as an everlasting Father, and everliving Priest: his word also, which he has spoken and delivered to us, as it is a quickening so it is a living word, the last revelation, and which shall last through all the revolutions of time to the endless ages of eternity.

2. Here it is brought in by way of instruction and encouragement to the young converts, whom the apostle in the foregoing verses is exhorting to holiness and love. Be *holy*, and *love one another*,[i] and so prepare yourselves for the blessedness of heaven, which consists in the perfection of holiness and love; for you are born again, not of corruptible seed,[k] not of the Gentile learning, or the Jewish law, both which wither as grass, and will perish in the using, but by the word of the gospel, which is quick and powerful, and abides for ever; which will continue in the world while that stands, and in the sanctified soul while it lives: in the former it has lighted a candle which all the devils in hell cannot blow out; in the latter it has opened a well of living water, *springing up to life eternal.*

This consideration is very proper, and should be very powerful to quicken and confirm those who have delivered themselves into the mould of the gospel, and are leavened by it, that the principles they go upon are not doubtful or mutable, but eternal truths that will never fail; and though their ministers die, (Christ's followers as well as his forerunners are as grass, and their glory as a flower,) yet their faith does not die with them, for it rests not on the testimony of mortal men, but of the immortal God: they are lights, but they are not *that light*;[l] they seem to be pillars, but they are not our foundation; we soon see the end, the exit, of their conversation, but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. To him therefore let us stedfastly adhere, and in him let us encourage ourselves and one another, on such a sorrowful occasion as that which brings us together at this time.

Two doctrines naturally arise from this text,

I. That man and his glory are fading and withering. *All flesh is grass.*

II. That God and his word are everliving, and everlasting. *The word of the Lord endures.* The former of these will furnish us with matter of lamentation, the latter of consolation; and God by his grace make both instructive, both to him that speaks and them that hear.

I. That man and his glory are fading and withering. We may truly say, This day is this Scripture fulfilled before our eyes, as we have heard so have we now seen, *All flesh is as grass*, and that grass withers. Nay, all the glory of man, all that which he is most valued and admired for, is as the flower of the grass, and that flower fadeth and falleth away.

1. Every funeral proves that *all flesh is as grass*, and that that *grass withers*. The body is here called *flesh*, because as flesh it is apt to putrify, it has no consistence, nor can any confidence be put in it; flesh is continually wasting, and would soon be consumed if not continually supplied, and, there-

[a] Luke xx. 16. [b] John i. 23. [c] Luke iii. 15. [d] John iii. 30. [e] John v. 35. [f] 1 John i. 1. [g] Dan. ix. 26, 27. [h] Heb. vii. 8. [i] Heb. vii. 15, 22. [k] Heb. vii. 23. [l] John i. 7, 8.

fore, from it rather than from the bones (which without the flesh are a skeleton, and the very image of death) the living body has its denomination. Flesh is sometimes put for the corruption and sinfulness of our nature, to which our frailty and mortality are owing: *The body is dead because of sin*, and therefore it is fitly called flesh when it is spoken of as withering.

*All flesh is grass*, that is,

(1.) It is weak, and low, and little as grass. Mankind is indeed numerous as the grass of the field, multiplies, replenishes, and covereth the earth; but like grass, it is of the earth, earthy, mean, and of small account. Alas, the kingdoms of men which make so great a noise, so great a figure, in this lower world, are but as so many fields of grass compared with the bright and glorious constellations of stars, made up of the holy and blessed inhabitants of the upper regions. Man in his present state looks great, when set in the scale against the beasts that perish; but very little, yea, less than nothing, and vanity, when compared with the angels, and spirits of just men made perfect.

Proud men think themselves like the strong and stately cedars, oaks, or pines, but they soon find themselves as grass, as the grass of the field, liable to be nipt with every frost, trampled on by every foot, continually insulted by common calamities of human life, which we can no more resist or guard ourselves against, than the grass can secure itself from the fatal blast, when the wind passeth over it, and it is gone.

(2.) It is withering, and fading, and dying as grass; having both its rise and maintenance out of the earth, it hastens to the earth, and retires to its root and foundation in the dust. It soon withers, and is gone ere we are aware. In the morning, perhaps, it is green and growing up, its aspect pleasing, its prospect promising; but when we come to look upon it in our evening work, we find it cut down and withered. Nay, the grass upon the house-top, which seems advanced above its fellows, and proud of its advancement, withers first, and is least accounted of, withers before it grows up, and never fills the mower's hand; as if the nearer it came to the habitations of men, the greater impression of frailty it received, and the plainer instruction of frailty it gave.

If it be not cut down by disease or disaster, it will soon wither of itself; it has in it the principles of its own corruption.* Age will certainly wither it, and it shall not return to the days of its youth; it will be withered in the grave, there it will be mingled with, and not distinguished from, common dust. The bones will there be unclothed presently, and the poor remains of this withered grass the worms shall feed sweetly on. Let but the earth open her bosom a little, and it will appear like Ezekiel's vision, a *valley full of dead and dry bones; very many* they are, and lo, *they are very dry*:[m] but see, with an eye of faith, what they shall be shortly; these dry bones shall live, and shall again be clothed and covered, not with corruptible flesh, but with incorruptible, when what is sown a natural body shall be raised a spiritual one.

Is all flesh grass? all, without exception of the noble, or the fair, the young, or the strong, the well-born, or well-built, the well-fed, or well-bred? Is all grass, weak and withering?

[1.] Then let us see ourselves to be grass; and humble and deny ourselves. Is the body grass? Then be not proud, be not presumptuous, be not confident of a long continuance here; forget not that the foot may crush thee. Am I grass? Then I must expect to wither, and prepare accordingly, and lay up my portion and happiness in none of the delights and accommodations of this animal life, which will all wither and perish with it, but in something suited to the nature of an immortal soul, and which will last as long as it lasts. Am I grass? Then I may wither suddenly, and know not how soon, and therefore must never be secure, nor adjourn the necessary preparations for my removal hence to any further day; but what I do, must do it quickly, before I wither, and it be too late. Grass falls; let me not be such a fool as to lay up my treasure in it. Stars fall not; let me therefore be so wise as to lay up my treasure above them, where neither moth nor rust corrupt.

Is the body grass? Then let us not indulge it too much, nor bestow too much time, and care, and pains about it, as many do, to the neglect of the better and immortal part. After all, we cannot keep it from withering, when its day shall come to fall; let us, therefore, be most solicitous to keep the soul from perishing, and to get that nourished up to life eternal; for that labour will not be in vain, but will turn to a good account.

[2.] Let us see others also to be as grass, and cease from man, because he is no more than thus to be accounted of. If all flesh be grass, then let us not trust in an arm of flesh, for it will soon be a withered arm, and unable to support and protect us; and they who make it their arm, will be like the heath in the desert, destitute and dejected. Grass is too short, too slender, to lean upon: the Egyptians are flesh, and not spirit, and therefore they shall help in vain. Let the Rock of Ages then be our stay, and let our hope always be in the Lord our God.

This is given also as a reason why we should not be afraid of the power of man, when it is most threatening, so as by it to be either driven from our

* *Mors sola fatetur quantula sint hominum corpuscula.*—Death only discovers the feebleness of the human frame.—*Juv.*

m Ezek. xxxvii. 2.

duty, or discouraged and disquieted in it: *Who art thou*, what a fool, to be *afraid of a man*, that cannot only do no more but *kill thy body*, (which is our Saviour's argument,) but must himself die, and the son of man, that shall be made as grass? Sure, thou forgettest the Lord thy Maker, whom thou oughtest to fear, and on whom thou hast all imaginable encouragement to depend: if he be for thee, what can a handful of grass do against thee?

Let this consideration also moderate our affections to all our creature comforts and enjoyments: If we set our hearts upon them, when they wither, where are we? What was too well beloved, will then be too much bewailed; and the flowers that are laid in the bosom, or much smelled to, will soonest go to decay. Let those, therefore, who have yoke-fellows, children, and friends who are dear to them, take heed of making them too dear; but labour to be as though they had none, because they are all grass, whose time is short, and the fashion of which passeth away.

Thus let this be read as the inscription on every grave, even the graves of the common people; let this be heard as the voice of every funeral knell, *All flesh is grass.* But,

2. Such a funeral as this we are now solemnizing, goes further into the text, and proves likewise, that *all the glory of man is as the flower of grass*, the beauty or verdure of it, and that *that flower falleth away.* If the grass wither, it follows of course, that the flower thereof falleth away; so that the Ethiopic version reads the text, *When the grass is dried the flower thereof is shaken off.* Life indeed may survive its beauties and joys, but take away that, and those fall of course.

We are now to consider, not common men, but men of distinction, and to see them withering and falling; which will bring us closer to this sad occasion. And here,

(1.) Let us inquire, What is the glory of man in this world? and what of it may be found in the character of that man, that son of man, whose death we are this day lamenting, and whose mortal part we have just now laid in bed?

There is indeed a glory of man, which is counterfeit, and mistaken for glory; Solomon says, *For men to search their own glory, is not glory*, Prov. xxv. 27. The glory men commonly pursue and search for, is no glory at all; it is nothing to the weight, the substantial weight of glory, which all who are governed by the principles of divine revelation set their eyes and hearts upon; yet, because it is taken for glory, and is courted and caressed accordingly, we must not pass it over without observing, that that also withers and falls away, as the flower of the grass, and leaves those ashamed of their pride and confidence, who called it glory, depend on it, and have nothing wherewith to balance the loss of it.

Is beauty and comeliness of body the glory of man? So they pass with some, who judge by the sight of the eye; but at the best, they are only the goodliness of grass; they are deceitful, they are vain, they are a flower which death will certainly cut down: and commonly it is withered first: either time, or the end of time, will change the countenance; either wrinkled age, or pale death. Look into the coffin and tell me, where is the rosy cheek, the ruddy lip, the sparkling eye, the charming air, and all the delicate features: they are all cut off, like the foam upon the water. The bubble is broke, and as the prophet speaks, *Instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of well set hair baldness.* We should therefore make sure the beauty of grace, the hidden man of the heart, which neither age nor death will sully.

Is wealth the glory of man? Laban's sons thought so, when they said concerning Jacob, Of that which was our father's hath he gotten *all this glory*, Gen. xxxi. 1. But this also is a fading flower; *riches make themselves wings*, and sometimes flee away from us. However, when we take wing, we must be stripped of them, and go naked out of the world, as we came naked into it.

Is pomp and grandeur the glory of a man? That also withers away: they who are advanced ever so high must come down to the grave, and their glory shall not descend after them. Great names and titles of honour are written in the dust. And if after death they be written on the dust, yet how is the inscription reproached by that which lies under! Pompous sepulchres, like the whited ones our Saviour speaks of, appear beautiful outward, but within are full of dead men's bones,[n] which yet they who go over them are not aware of.[o]

Let us therefore be dead to these glories, not value them, nor ourselves, or others, by them, in comparison with spiritual glory; let us not envy those who have these glories, nor fret at our want or loss of them; but always look upon them with a gracious and generous contempt and indifference, as those who know better things, and hope for a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, a glory that fadeth not away.

But besides these glories of men, which they who are wise can humbly put a slight upon, there is a glory, which is in this world truly the glory of man, and which they who are wise justly put a value upon; and yet that, as to its bright reflections upon this world of ours, withers and fades, and falls at death as the flowers in the grass. The continuance of the best gifts is in the other world, when they are transplanted thither, not in this.

[n] Matt. xxiii. 27. [o] Luke xi. 44.

[p] Matt. vi. 29, 30.

The flowers in the grass are most pleasant to the eye, and most taken notice of; those are the pride and pleasures of the spring. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like that part of the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.[p] Yet the flower fades and falls away before the rest of the grass does, and the fairest is first cropt. The choicest fruits keep the worst; and that we are least sure of, which we think we have reason to be most fond of. Witness this funeral. We have left in the dust, not only grass, but the flower of the grass; one who had very much of that which is really the glory of a man in this world, and was thereby distinguished and endeared. It is one of the lilies of the field that is withered in our hand, and dropt out of it. Give me leave to show you in some instances what I think there was in him that was really the glory of a man, that you may duly lament his fall, and be affected with it.

[1.] Is a large capacity of mind the glory of a man? That he was blessed with above most I have known. Every soul is upon some account called the great soul of man; so high is it advanced above the beasts, and so nearly allied to the world of angels: but that soul which is now retired from the world, was in a peculiar manner a great soul; it was an extraordinary genius that presided in it, piercing in its searches, quick in its perceptions, and vastly extended to take in a great multitude and variety of ideas. God gave to him much of that largeness of heart which he gave to Solomon, that is, *wisdom and understanding exceeding much*.[q]

Those who knew him well, and sat down under his shadow, could not but observe in all his performances, both sacred and learned, such a compass of thought, and copiousness of expression, as showed him to have an uncommon constitution of mind, formed for something great, and likely out of its abundance to enrich many: it was a soul too great indeed to be long confined to a body, and pent up in a house of clay, which is such a cloud upon the prospects, and such a clog to the elevation, of a mind thus raised and enlarged. His soul, I confess, has sometimes seemed to me fluttering and struggling to get clear of its cage, and longing to fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven, to remove to the glorious light and glorious liberty of the children of God; ambitious to see that which is within the veil, and which cannot be seen in this land of darkness and mistake; where, at the best, we know but in part, and prophesy but in part, and must be content to do so, till that which is perfect is come.

[2.] Is learning to be reckoned the glory of a man? It is certainly so; for it is the elevation of that part of man which is most his honour: and the dust of a learned man we have now been mingling with the common earth. His soul (that great and stately room) was richly furnished with all manner of precious things, and there was no reason to complain either of confusion or of emptiness in it; it was neither bare walls, nor set about with toys.

How early he began to gather, in the days of his youth, (and manna must be gathered in the morning,) we who knew him then, well remember; and were pleased to observe what great and good preparation he made for the temple, and the service of it; what a noble offering of dedicated things he brought into it, when he devoted himself to the work of the ministry; what a full stock he began to trade with, and how well able, with the good householder, to bring out of his treasury things new and old.

And while he has been trading with this stock, he has been manifestly adding to it; for there is who scatters, and *yet* increases; who scatters, and *so* increases. He sat not down content with what he had attained to, but was still eager and vigorous in the pursuit of knowledge, still pressing forward; and how greatly God prospered him in those pursuits they know very well, who for some years past have been under his tuition, and have lighted their candle at his taper; and to all others also that conversed with him, it recommended him as a lovely and pleasant flower, though the treasure being in an earthen vessel, it was but a flower of the grass, now withered and fallen away.

That part of his education which he had in the university of Glasgow, he often reflected upon with a great deal of pleasure; and took all occasions to mention with honour the learned professors at whose feet he sat there, and the great advantages he had by their instructions; which I thought myself obliged to take notice of, both in justice to them whom God made blessings to him, and to his praise likewise, that he always retained a grateful remembrance of those who were the guides of his youth. It was a great refreshment and encouragement to St. Paul, to hear that those whom he had had the teaching of, had good remembrance of him always, and that he was not out of mind when he was out of sight.

[3.] Is tenderness and humility, modesty and sweetness of temper, the glory of a man? They are so, and therefore we call compassion by the name of humanity, as if there were nothing that did better become a man than that, nor were more his ornament; this is true manhood, though another disposition, very different from it, commonly goes under that name. The most mild are really the most manly. While the fierce show themselves brutes, the gentle, and easy to be entreated, show themselves men.

And this glory of a man was one of the glories of that man we have now parted with, and it made him a flower above the common grass. On the humble in spirit God looks with particular regard, and so

[p] Matt. vi. 29, 30.

[q] 1 Kings iv. 29.

should we. How often has he expressed to me such a diffidence of himself, and such a mean opinion of his own abilities, and all his performances, as has really been an hinderance to his cheerfulness, and sometimes to his usefulness! I have seldom heard him speak of any thing he did, but as one ashamed of it, though he was, as much as most, a workman that needed not to be ashamed. Such an humble sense as this of our own defects, will contribute much to our improvement. Those who never think they do well enough, will be striving (and not in vain) to do better; while those who always think they do well, are in danger of doing worse.

I have likewise observed in him a most tender concern for others, and for their comfort, and a care that all about him should be easy and pleased; his conversation was as endearing as it was edifying: herein he aimed to follow the great apostle, who made himself the servant of all, and became all things to all men, that he might recommend religion to their good opinion; and a greater than he, for even Christ pleased not himself, but taught us by his example, as well as by his doctrine, to deny ourselves.

His compassion for the sick and pained, the poor and needy, was that which first put him upon the study of physic, as his παρεργον—*his by-business*, in which how serviceable he was to the sons and daughters of affliction, and how sensibly he sympathized with them, many who have been the better for it will witness. Bowels of mercies well become the elect of God, who are holy and beloved.

[4.] Is the faithful discharge of the ministry of the gospel the glory of a man? It is so, and it was his glory, and made him one of the flowers of the grass, a sweet savour to God in them who are saved and in them that perish. This earthen vessel, which is now broken and laid aside, had a treasure lodged in it of inestimable value, even the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

What greater glory can a man have on this side heaven, than to be employed as an ambassador for Christ, and an angel of the church, and to obtain mercy of the Lord, to be found faithful in that embassy, in that ministration. We have all the reason in the world to humble and abase ourselves; but the office we are in we have reason to magnify. Let none be ashamed of it, but those who are a shame to it: then indeed we may blush to think that we are called by so worthy a name, when we walk unworthy of it, otherwise it is a high, because a holy, calling.

It is now about eleven years since, with an exemplary seriousness and humility, he laid his hand to that plough, immediately upon the death of my honoured father, who had been one of the guides of his youth; how hardly he was persuaded to succeed him, and how modestly he preached his first sermon on Elihu's apology, *Days should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom*, I well remember. How can I forget that ingenious and judicious confession of faith, which he made some time after at his ordination, and with what a clear head, and fixed heart, he then solemnly devoted himself to the service of God in the work of the ministry, and with such a diffidence of himself, as was really a presage of something great; for *before honour is humility*.

How abundantly he laboured in the work of the Lord, and what pains he took in expounding, catechising, praying, preaching, visiting, as well as studying, many here can witness. I wish his dust were not a witness of it, fearing that his close application of mind to his work, his indefatigable prosecution of his several designs to do good, together with the tenderness of his spirit, and the too deep impressions which his cares and griefs made upon it, contributed to the shortening his days. They talk of some who live fast, who hasten their own deaths by their intemperance; but truly, those who live ill, cannot be said to live fast; for they do not live at all to any purpose, they do not the work of life, nor answer the ends of it: rather say, they die fast; for those who live in pleasures are dead while they live.[r] But here was one who did indeed live fast, did spend and was spent in the business of life, and gave this reason why he took so much pains in his work, because he thought he had but a little time to be working in. His heart seemed to be much set on that Scripture, and it is not long since he preached upon it on occasion of the death of a worthy good friend of his at Whitchurch, *I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day; the night comes when no man can work.*

[5.] Is great usefulness the glory of a man? and a delight in doing good? No doubt it is so: it was the honour of our blessed Saviour himself, and is mentioned as one of the proofs of his divine mission, that he went about not only working miracles, but doing good; and it was the honour of our deceased brother, in his low and narrow sphere, and according to the grace given to him.

Besides the labours of his ministry, what pains did he take for some years of late in the education of youth, for which God had every way wonderfully qualified him, and what pleasure did he take in those pains, because he had reason to think he did good that way, not only to the few that he taught, but to the many who hereafter might be taught by them. And there are those who, I hope, will, while they live, bless God for him, and for his happy care in that part of his work, in which he was as in his element,

[r] 1 Tim. v. 6.

and by the fruits of which, being dead, he will yet speak.

And his spending his spare hours in caring for and ministering to the sick, and so doing good to the bodies of others, (perhaps to the prejudice of his own,) was a further instance of his delight in being useful, and a benefactor to mankind. And *who is he that will harm us*, or *can, if we be* thus τυ αγαθυ μιμηται—*followers of him that is good*,[s] and doth good, in his goodness and beneficence?

Well, here is the glory of man, of this man; let us be ambitious of this glory, and not of vain glory. See true honour in the paths of wisdom and virtue, and seek it there. This is honour that comes from God, and is in his sight of great price. He who in humility, sincerity, and holy love and charity, lays out himself to serve Christ and his generation in his place, shall be accepted of God, which is what he aims at, and over and above, shall be approved of all wise and good men.

(2.) Having seen this flower flourishing, we are now to see it withering, and the glory of this man fallen away; the black and dark side of that cloud which we have been taking a pleasant prospect of the bright side of. As to himself, this glory is not fallen, is not lost, is not stained, is not touched by death; it is not like worldly honour, laid in the dust, and buried in the grave: no, this flower is transplanted from the garden on earth to the paradise in heaven, where it shall never fade, nor fall away, nor ever so much as close, or hang the head. This that was a star in the right hand of Christ, a star that helped to show the way to Bethlehem, though withdrawn from our orb, shines as the sun in the firmament of the Father; shines to himself, to his Master, and the world of holy angels and glorified saints. This great soul is there filled, its capacities vastly enlarged, and yet replenished; his learning is there completed; his searches after knowledge all crowned, and all his longings satisfied; he who knew but in part, and prophesied but in part, and was lamenting the deficiences of both, has now attained to that which is perfect, and that which is in part is done away, he having no more occasion for it. The candles are put out when the sun rises. His graces are perfected too, and all the remainders of corruption done away. Whatever men say, there are no consummate virtues on this side heaven, nor any finished man. The great good work in this world is in the doing. In the New Jerusalem it will be said, *It is done.*

But it is his usefulness that we want, that is it which we bewail the loss of; as to us and the world we are yet in, this grass is withered, this flower is faded and gone, this star is fallen. The works of good men follow them, but they forsake us, and we are deprived of the benefit of them; and therefore, however in love to them we may see some cause to rejoice, for they are better where they are than where they were, yet as to ourselves, we are losers by it; nor can we say of good ministers what was true of our Master, that it was expedient for us that they should go away. No, their abiding in the flesh would certainly be more profitable for us. Our Saviour considered that, when he said, concerning his disciples, *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world.*

This is the lamentation thereof, and shall be for a lamentation, that we have lost one whose continuance with us would have been a great blessing to our dark world. Over him we may mourn in the ancient forms of mourning, *Ah, my brother! Ah, my lord!* and *Ah, his glory!*[t] The flower we were pleased with the enjoyment of, we are now pained for the withering of; *Ichabod*, where is the glory of it? It is gone, it is fallen away.

[1.] We have lost an eminently good and useful man, and one who was by the liberal hand both of nature and grace, that is, the God of nature and the God of grace, made truly valuable and desirable.

You of this congregation have lost a faithful guide in the things of God, an interpreter, one among a thousand, a master of your assembly, whose words were as goads to quicken, and as nails to fasten. May that fruit of them remain among you now he is gone. One whose profiting appeared unto all men, and who was likely to have been yet more and more serviceable to your faith and holiness, and longer the helper of your joy; who was far from any thing that savoured of faction or party-making, but was entirely governed by principles of catholic charity; in the essentials of religion zealous, in things indifferent, and which are controverted among the wise and good, moderate; in both conscientious.

The loss his pupils have of him I cannot express, nor they neither, so admirably fitted was he with a head and heart to serve them. What a tender concern he had for them and their welfare, was very evident, and how much he laid to heart the death of two of them who were very hopeful a little after he came to this town, and how long the impressions of that affliction stuck by him, those about him observed. They having been so dear to him, I hope his memory will always be precious to them, and they will not only do him honour at his death, by lamenting their loss of him, but do him honour after his death, by a diligent building upon the foundation he laid.

We who are ministers have lost one who was very much our ornament and strength, and likely to be more and more so, and that is come upon us which St. Paul dreaded in the death of Epaphroditus,

[s] 1 Pet. iii. 13.

[t] Jer. xxii. 18.

*Sorrow upon sorrow,*[u] of this kind, we are *broken with breach upon breach.*

As for his near and dear relations, when I come to put my soul into their stead, I must say, *Their heart knows its own bitterness;* but a stranger cannot pretend to describe it. Call them *Mara*, for the *Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with them.*[v]

[2.] We have lost him in the midst of his days, in the midst of his usefulness, when he had not reached quite half way to that period of human life which Moses long since fixed at seventy. This is a very great aggravation of our loss, and makes the burthen lie very heavy upon us. When God would make the land tremble, and every one mourn, he threatens that he will cause the sun to go down at noon; and so darken the earth in the clear day. This is our case; here is a sun gone down at noon, eclipsed in its meridian lustre; a valuable life, to our great surprise, cut off abruptly, without the previous notice of age, or any chronical distemper. At night the sun knows its going down, and we expect it; we are none of us so ignorant as to count upon an eternal day within the horizon of time; but till night we think ourselves sure of the sun. What a confusion is it to us then if it go down at noon! So uncertain are all our enjoyments, and so little do we know what a few days may bring forth concerning us or them, even the dearest.

We looked that this had been he who should long have been a burning and shining light among us; that he should long have strengthened our hands, and adorned our interest, and that we and ours should have reaped much fruit from his labours; such a workman we hoped might have been an instrument of gathering in a great harvest of souls to Christ, might have been a spiritual father to many children, nay, to many fathers; but our expectations are dashed, and laid in the dust. *We looked for light, but behold obscurity;* we forgot that the life we valued so was a vapour, which, as it proves, appears for a little while, and then vanishes away, and leaves us astonished. We said, Surely this life shall comfort us, concerning our work, and the toil of our hands; but behold his death does so much the more afflict us. We were exceeding glad of the gourd, and said, under its shadow we shall live, but little thought it would so soon have withered! Lord, *what is man at his best estate?*

[3.] That which yet further aggravates our grief, is that we have few such left behind. I know God has the residue of the Spirit, and can out of stones raise up children unto Abraham. But which way to look for such men as these, we do not see. Here is a breach made, and what prospect have we of the repair of it? Our hands are weakened, and who shall strengthen them? A gap is made, and who shall fill it up? Jehovah-jireh—*let the Lord provide* for us; for how to provide for ourselves we know not. We have too much reason to renew the prophet's complaint, *Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits; my soul desired the first ripe fruits;* but alas! *where are the clusters?* It is the Lord's doing, and we must acquiesce in it: if we must be emptied and brought low, his will be done. *Let us now fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great;* but *let us not fall into the hands of man*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

(3.) Let us, in the next place, inquire what is our duty now we are lamenting the fall of such a flower of the grass, that we may sow in these tears.

[1.] Let us be deeply humbled for our sins, which have provoked God thus to contend with us; into this channel let us turn our tears, and then they will turn to a good account. Sorrow for sin is that godly sorrow which is not to be repented of. O that the providence of this day might have this good effect upon us, to open springs of repentance in us, that we may look not only on our dying Master, but on our dead and dying ministers, and mourn. Ministers are sent, by the labours of their lives to be the death of our sins, to bruise the head of those old serpents, as instruments in Christ's hand. Is this work done? Is sin crucified and mortified in you? If not, sin is the death of your ministers, who should have been its death. Your unmortified lusts are the greatest mortification to your ministers; it is sin that silences them; it is sin that slays them; perhaps efficiently, at least to such a tender spirit as this was, people's unprofitableness, and unsuitable walking, saddens their ministers' hearts, and perhaps does more than you are aware of to the shortening of their days. If we improve not the advantages we have by a powerful lively ministry, it is just with God to deprive us of it.

O think the worse of sin for this, and resolve never to be reconciled to it; lay the axe to the root of that mischievous thing, which separates between you and so much good. Is there any of you in an unconverted state? Return to God now in compliance with the call of this providence. Have any of you been hitherto cumbering the ground? Now at length begin to bring forth fruit, lest all the dressers of the vineyard be removed, the rain withheld, and you laid under the curse of barrenness, the just punishment of the sin of barrenness.

[2.] Let us by prayer and universal reformation go forth to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, and stand in the gap to turn away his wrath, that he may not make a full end. If you have any interest at the throne of grace, improve it now: let your closets and families witness for you, that you

[u] Phil. ii. 27.

[v] Ruth i. 20.

are of those whose hearts tremble for the ark of God: O lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left, that it may yet be left and increased. At such a time as this God wonders if there be no intercessor; which in another place is thus expressed, *He wonders if there be none to uphold;* which implies, that those who intercede on the behalf of the declining interests of God's kingdom, do really uphold them, and help to recover them. O pray that God would pour out a double portion of his Spirit on those who survive; and if the Spirit be but poured out upon us from on high, even the wilderness will soon become a fruitful field for all this.

And if you would have your prayers effectual, you must return to him who smites you. For God's sake, for precious Jesus's sake, for your own souls' sake, for your dear ministers' sakes, if you love them, and would keep them alive, if you would comfort them, and reap the comfort and benefit of their labours, leave your sins; amend what is amiss in your hearts, and lives, and families; be reformed by this.

The death of good ministers is not a judgment upon them, it is their gain, the happy period of their toils and griefs, *They rest from their labours*, and are *entered into the joy of their Lord;* but it is a judgment upon you; it is your loss, and should be your grief. To you therefore, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men: O that you would hear the voice of the Lord's controversy, and answer the intention of it, which is to part between you and your sins.

[3.] Let the withering of this flower be a seasonable conviction to us of the vanity of this world. Let it help to take our hearts off from it, and awaken us to think of leaving it. Let us learn to cease from man, from such men, for even their breath is in their nostrils, and not raise our expectations too high from them. Are such *flowers as these withered*, the choicest flowers that grow on this earth? And shall we expect happiness and satisfaction in any thing under the sun, in any thing that springs out of this earth, or is found in it?

When such a one dies in his full strength; one who was so likely to live, and live to good purpose; why should we count upon many years to come, or think of death as a thing at a distance? If the flowers be thus withered and cut down, let the weeds expect to be plucked up: for if this be done in the green trees, what shall be done in the dry? If the fruitful flourishing trees be removed, let us who cumber the ground, not expect to stand long. The Lord awaken us all, by this and the like providences, to consider our latter end, and to make necessary preparations for it with all diligence.

[4.] Let this providence help to endear heaven to us, and draw up our hearts and affections thither. The glory even of the saints in this world, is as the flower of the grass, withering and fading; but it is not so in that world, where they are crowned with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. They are not there as the flower when it shooteth forth in its weakness, but as the sun when he goes forth in his strength. Converse much with that world, frequently contemplate that glory, till by the Spirit of the Lord you be in some measure changed into the same image, even the image of the heavenly.

I believe your ministers were very dear to you; let them be so still. Though while they were continued to you, they were more yours than they are; yet now they are gone to heaven, they are far more excellent than they were, more wise, and more holy, and every way better. Believe this, and love them, and long to be with them. Think whither they are gone, and let your hearts by faith, hope, love, and holy devotion, follow them to the things which are above, on which as Christians we are to set our affections. To the upper world their nobler part is removed *out of the body*, thither let ours attend them while in the body. Think where they are, and sit with them in heavenly places; keep up a spiritual communion, not only with the innumerable company of angels, but with the spirits of just men made perfect, to whom, as believers, we are already come. Think what they are doing, and join with them, as well as you can, by your humble, thankful praises of *him that sits upon the throne, and the Lamb*. As we pray, so let us endeavour, to do the will of God on earth, as the holy angels and blessed saints above are doing it. Think of the joy they have entered into, and let it make death desirable to you, that if in life you follow them, who through faith and patience are gone to inherit the promises, you shall at death remove to them: let the death of your dear friends and ministers, make you think with desire and pleasure of that removal.

And here I cannot forbear transcribing some expressions of that blessed martyr St. Cyprian, which have sometimes much affected me, and are much to the same purpose with this head I am upon, and therefore I shall not translate them. *Amplectamur diem qui assignat singulos domicilio suo, qui nos isthinc ereptos et laqueis secularibus exutos paradiso restituit et regno cœlesti—Let us embrace the day which assigns each to his habitation, which takes us from these earthly snares, and gives us to paradise and the heavenly kingdom.——Quid non properamus et currimus ut patriam nostram videre, ut parentes salutare, possimus! Magnus illic nos carorum numerus expectat, frequens nos et copiosa turba desiderat: jam de suâ immortalitate secura, et adhuc de nostrâ incolumitate sollicita. Illic apostolorum gloriosus chorus; illic prophetarum exultantium numerus—What speed we make, when the object is to see our country, or to salute our parents! An immense multitude of dear*

*friends await our arrival, secure themselves of their own immortality, and anxious only for our salvation. There is the glorious company of the apostles; there are the exulting prophets.——Ad hos, fratres dilectissimi, avidâ cupiditate properemus, ut cum his cito esse possimus, &c.—To these, beloved brethren, let us hasten with all possible expedition.* Serm. 4. De Mortalitate.

II. Though man and glory are fading and withering, yet God and his word are ever-living and everlasting. Ministers die, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. The word of the gospel, that last revelation, after which we are to look for no other, does not change, shall not cease, till the mystery of God shall be finished. The glory of the law was done away, but that of the gospel remains. The glory of ministers falls away, but not the glory of the word they are ministers of. The prophets, indeed, do not live for ever, but the words which God commanded them did, and will take hold, as words quick and powerful. On such a sad occasion as this, it is very seasonable to consider, *that the word of the Lord endures for ever;* that is,

1. There is in the word of the Lord an everlasting rule of faith and practice for us to be ruled by; so that our religion *shall not* die with our ministers, and therefore *should not:* in the word it will still live, and therefore must still live with us.

(1.) It is our comfort, that Christianity shall not die with our ministers, nor that light be buried in their graves. Were the divine truths and laws intrusted with tradition, those invaluable treasures as the world goes, would in time be lost, or wretchedly embezzled. While religion passed in that way of conveyance before Moses, men lived to be very old; yet that did not secure it, but it almost perished: care is taken, therefore, now to preserve it in the written word, and it is its effectual security, so that it can never perish, neither shall any pluck it out of our hands. If we were all in our graves, our religion would be found in our Bibles, pure and complete, and by that sure word of prophecy, a much firmer deed of entail than an uninterrupted succession of pastors, would be transmitted to the last ages of time. Thus upheld, the throne of Christ shall endure for ever, and be as the days of heaven.

(2.) It is our duty not to let our Christianity die with our ministers, but let the word of Christ, contained in the Scriptures, still dwell in us richly, that is still the same: when we have another minister we have not another gospel, nor durst an angel himself bring us any other. You see gospel ministers, like the priests under the law, cannot continue by reason of death, but as Christ's priestly office by his intercession in heaven, so his prophetical office by his word and Spirit on earth, are unchangeable; the word of God lives and abides for ever.

The death of our ministers should therefore make us love our Bibles the better, and be more conversant with them, for in them the Spirit speaks expressly, speaks to us. Your ministers said no other things but what are contained in the Scriptures; blessed Paul himself witnessed no other things but what agreed with Moses and the prophets; Christ himself bid his hearers search the Scriptures; that sacred book you have to be your guide, if your teachers should be removed into corners, into graves. Let me engage you therefore, in God's name, to stick to your Bibles, stick close to them; consult the Scriptures as your oracle, as your touchstone; speak according to this light, walk according to this rule, and let its perpetuity engage you constantly and unmovably to persevere to the end in your adherence to it. Does the word of the Lord endure for ever? Let it be in you a well of living water.

You profess to make the Scripture the commanding rule of your worship, and say, you cannot admit any religious rites but what are there appointed; but you contradict yourselves, and give the lie to your profession, if you do not make the Scripture the commanding rule of your conversation also. Govern your thoughts, words, and actions by the word of God, and not by the will of the flesh, or the course of this world. As our religion may be found in our Bibles, so our Bibles should be found in our hearts and lives. Value and love a ministry that will lead you into the understanding and application of the Scriptures, for these will make the man of God (both the minister and the Christian) perfect, and thoroughly furnished both for every good word and work.

2. There is in the word of the Lord an everlasting fountain of comfort and consolation for us to be refreshed and encouraged by, and to draw water from with joy; and an everlasting foundation, on which to build our hopes. When we find that all flesh is as grass, and even the flower of it withers, there is no comfort like this, that the word of the Lord endures for ever. Hence let me recommend strong and lasting consolation to those who are this day lamenting their withered grass and fallen flower.

(1.) With this, let me comfort the near and dear relations of him that we now have parted with; the flower you delighted in, and promised yourselves so much from, is withered and fallen, and laid in the dust; but the word of the Lord endures for ever, and that will never fail you; the more you expect from it by faith, the more you will find in it to your comfort; it is by the word that God comforts them who are cast down; and because it endures for ever, they are everlasting consolations that are drawn from it.

Let this comfort the aged parents; they have the word of God to be their stay, when this staff of their old age is broken under them; God will be better

to you than ten sons, than ten such sons, a God all-sufficient, a God that is enough.

Let the fatherless children, who are not yet capable of knowing their loss, be left with the everlasting Father, and be sure that the word of the Lord endures for ever; *With thee the fatherless findeth mercy*, and *the generation of the upright shall be blessed.*

Let the widow, the prophet's widow, trust in God, and that word of his which endures for ever, the comfort of that afflicted state. *Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name*, and he has *betrothed thee to him for ever*, by a bond which death itself cannot untie, in loving-kindness and tender mercies. Let this be the comfort of the house of mourning, though it be not so as in months past; though it be a beheaded, broken family, yet the covenant of grace made with the house, and the church in it, is well ordered in all things, and sure; and let that be all the desire, for it is all the salvation, 2 Sam. xiii. 5. and may be so improved in this cloudy and dark day.

(2.) With this, let me encourage the students. The Lord has taken your master from your head to-day. I know you loved him dearly, and doubt not but you truly lament the loss of him, and are ready to say, *My father, my father!* Your counsels are ruffled and your measures broke by this providence; but remember, the word of the Lord endures for ever. Study your Bibles, and you will find them the best tutors; tutors that will never die; in them learn Christ, and you have the best learning; let God's word be your delight and your counsellor, make it familiar to you, and when you go it shall lead you, when you sleep it shall keep you, when you wake it shall talk with you. Take God's statutes as your heritage for ever, and let them be the rejoicing of your hearts. Grow in Scripture knowledge, and in the things of God; speak Scripture language, accustom yourselves to it; that is sound speech which cannot be condemned.

And for your comfort, the seed which serves the Lord, among whom the word of the Lord endures, shall be accounted to him for a generation. The Lord God of the holy will never forget, will never forsake, the sons of the prophets who adhere to him, and are mindful of him. Be ye humble, diligent, and faithful, and you will find God the same to you that he was to him who is gone; and the best are no better than he made them; you will find Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. To him I commend you, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to make you instrumental to build up others in holy faith to the heavenly kingdom.

(3.) Let me, with this, speak comfortably to this poor congregation. These two things are come upon thee, the death of two ministers; two *such* ministers! *Wherewith shall I comfort thee?* What more comfortable than this, That *the word of the Lord endures for ever?* You have not lost that. You may perhaps be tempted to think it is in vain to seek for such helps, such helpers, any more; you have procured some of the best, and God has removed them from you, perhaps for the same reason that he once and again lessened Gideon's army, because it was too numerous for him to work by. God delights to perfect strength in weakness; he will secure to himself a succession, and, I hope, to you too. Bless God for your aged minister who is yet continued to you; value him the more; seek out for another in the room of him that is gone, and God, I trust, will send you one to be a helper of your faith and joy.

Let God's word endure for ever your guide, and it will endure for ever your comfort. Love the Scriptures, make much of them, be daily learning yourselves, and teaching your children, out of them. Christ's scholars never learn above their Bibles, while they are here under tutors and governors; at death they shall take their leave of them, and go thither where there is no occasion for them.

4. Let us all, both ministers and people, comfort ourselves and one another with this word: *All flesh is grass;* but the Eternal Spirit is the life of our souls. The glory of man fades and falls away, but the glory of God-man does not: on his head shall the crown ever flourish. The glory of the gospel is the same; and the crown of glory prepared for the faithful, fadeth not away; in these is continuance. The foundation of God stands sure for all this, and it is an everlasting foundation.

Let not therefore the atheists or profane, those enemies of our holy religion, rejoice against us, though we fall, though our grass withers, and our flowers fall thus; for though we sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto us, an everlasting light, and our God our glory. His word shall endure for ever, though the ministers of it are lights that are but a little while with us, and it is only for a season that we rejoice in their light. That never-failing word is the firm and immovable rock upon which the church is built, and therefore the gates of hell cannot, shall not, prevail against it. While the earth remains, the seed time and the harvest of the world will continue; nay, heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of Christ never shall, not one *iota* or tittle of it. Divine revelation shall ride out the storm of all opposition, and triumph over the powers of darkness; shall not only keep its ground, but gain its point; shall go forth conquering and to conquer, till the mystery of God shall be finished, the mystical body completed, and the kingdom delivered up to God, even the Father, that God may be all in all.

# A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF THE

# LIFE OF SAMUEL BENION, M. D.

He was born in a country place in the chapelry of Whicksal, in the parish of Prees, and county of Salop, June 14, 1673. His parents are still living, very religious good people, and of competent estate in the world, and he was their eldest son who lived.

His mother was the daughter of Mr. Richard Sadler, a worthy nonconformist minister, who was turned out from Ludlow by the Uniformity Act, and spent the rest of his days in obscurity at Whicksal. He died in 1675.

He was baptized by his grandfather, and called Samuel, because *asked of God*, and *devoted to him*.

He gave early indications of a happy genius, and a strong inclination both to learning and piety: and *even a child is known by his doings*.

He began his grammar learning, and made considerable progress in it with the schoolmaster at Whicksal: but in 1688, he was removed to the free-school of Wirksworth in Derbyshire, to be under the conduct and tuition of a very learned able master, Mr. Samuel Ogden, with whom he continued almost three years, till he was near eighteen years of age, a much longer time than youths of his proficiency ordinarily continue at the grammar-school; but he found the benefit of it, (as many who outrun their grammar learning too soon find the want of it,) for hereby he laid his foundation large and firm, got great acquaintance with the classic authors, made his after-studies the more easy and pleasant, and arrived to the felicity of speaking and writing Latin with great readiness, fluency, and exactness.

In 1691, he went to live with Mr. Henry at Broad Oak, who employed him in teaching some gentlemen's sons who were tabled with him, and directed and assisted him in his entrance upon his academical studies. Here he discovered an extraordinary skill in the languages, and prudence much above his years in the management of those who were under his charge; and Mr. Henry expressed much satisfaction in his conduct, and a particular kindness for him.

In 1692, he went to London, where he sojourned about half a year with the Reverend Mr. Edward Lawrence, and there had opportunity of hearing the best preachers, and perusing the best books; both which he failed not to improve much to his advantage. When he came down, he prosecuted his studies alone at his father's house with great application. Surely few who have so great a stock of learning have owed it, under God's blessing, so much to their own industry, and so little to the help either of tutors or of fellow-students. He beat it, as we say, out of the cold iron; and when it is so, the excellency of the power is so much the more of God.

In June, 1695, he went into Scotland to the College of Glasgow, with a young gentleman or two, whom he was intrusted with the conduct of. Having furnished himself before with a good treasure, and matter to work upon, the advantages of that place, during the year he spent there, turned to a good account. Here he studied closer than ever, sometimes not less than sixteen hours a-day, having a little food brought him to his study, and slipt not any opportunity of improving himself in useful knowledge.

His regent was Mr. Tran, whom he often spoke of with great respect, and who had a particular affection for him, and while he lived kept up a correspondence with him. The other learned men of that university he also often took occasion to make an honourable mention of. Mr. Jameson, History Professor there, did likewise correspond with him. That miracle of a man, who is quite blind, and has been so from his birth, and yet, as appears by the learned works he has published, a most accomplished scholar, and very ready and exact in his quotations of authors.

In May, 1696, he took his degree of Master of Arts there, and then returned to his father's house, where he would be near to Mr. Henry, under whose ministry he had been trained up, and now

intended for some time to sit down for his further improvement.

But within a few days after he came home, Mr. Henry finished his course, (June 24, 1696,) to his great grief and disappointment.

The beheaded congregation presently cast their eye upon him, as the most likely person to succeed Mr. Henry, being one of themselves, and one who upon all accounts promised well; and they had reason to think he would not be without honour, no not in his own country. Without looking any further, they unanimously made choice of him, and soon found their expectations from him even out-done.

He was then about twenty-three years of age, and had never preached, nor designed it quickly, but wished rather to continue yet for some time a student; so that it was not without great difficulty that he was persuaded to undertake the work itself; pleading with the prophet, (Jer. i. 6.) *Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child*, especially to undertake it there, and come in the room of such a man as Mr. Henry; this he was in a manner compelled to, often saying he even trembled to think of it. And truly, I think I never heard any man express himself with more humility and modesty, self-diffidence, and self-denial, than he did on all occasions.

But he plainly saw the providence of God calling him to this work, and therefore he submitted, and gave himself wholly to it. He lived at his father's house, and preached at Broad Oak; and all his performances were such, that none had any reason to despise his youth.

His great modesty would not suffer him to undertake the sole charge of that congregation, and therefore he was backward to be ordained, and desirous that the senior ministers of the neighbourhood would come and administer the sacraments to them, which they did for some time.

But in Jan. 1698, he was solemnly set apart to the work of the ministry, by the laying on of the hands of presbyters at Broad Oak, *plebe præsente—in the presence of the people.* And the confession of faith which he made at that time is so remarkably concise, that I think it worth inserting at large, and the rather because we have so little of his remaining in our hands. It is this:

"Being obliged to confess my faith, I humbly crave leave to do it in that method which hath been of singular use to me in confirming of it.

First, then, I cannot but be persuaded, that in this earthly tabernacle, my human body I mean, dwells an immortal soul, conscious to itself that it had a beginning, and must needs proceed from a Father of spirits.

I do therefore, in the next place, firmly believe that there is a God, that is, an Almighty, All-wise, All-good Being, all whose works must needs originally be both like him, according to the capacity of their nature, and worthy of him.

But sad experience hath effectually taught me, that I am naturally an unholy, impure, perverse creature; an ignorant, obstinate, selfish being: I cannot but conclude, therefore, that I am degenerated, and no such thing as I was when I came out of my Maker's hands.

I am satisfied, that I cannot restore myself, that no creature can restore me, and that the work of restitution being such as could not be effected, but by infinite power, it must needs be such as could not be contrived but by infinite wisdom; and that I should never have understood the methods of it, if God himself had not revealed them to me.

The necessity, therefore, of divine revelation, in order to eternal life, I am thoroughly persuaded of; and finding a volume in this world, termed by us the Holy Bible, that has in it all the marks of heavenly inspiration that the most inquisitive mind can reasonably imagine or desire, I believe it is the word of God, and with all my soul embrace it as the revelation I need, in order to my everlasting happiness.

According to it therefore, finding that the world by its wisdom knew not God, I form my conceptions of the first cause of all things, and I embrace heartily the doctrine asserting a Trinity of Persons in the Unity of the Godhead.

I believe, that Infinite Wisdom fore-ordained in eternity whatsoever shall come to pass in time; and that this whole world, according to the particular appointments of its creation, was made exactly in that admirable manner which the sacred history relates to us.

The account which the Scripture sets before us of the fall, wherein it lets us know our first parents, the once perfect representatives of all their posterity, lost their innocence and felicity together, do entirely satisfy me how sin and misery made their entry into this, ever since, unhappy world; and I believe I fell in them, and with them.

I believe the reports of a Mediator engaging in our cause, appeasing divine justice, reconciling men to God. And hereof, I think, I have even a demonstration in the present constitution of this world, and state of men here differing so vastly from that of the fallen angels. I believe, that this Mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ, Immanuel, who was made perfect by his sufferings, that he might bring all those whom purely free grace had chosen to be the sons of God, to eternal glory.

For these I believe, in the highest exaltation, the just reward of his voluntary abasement, he lives to make continual intercession, sending down upon each of them the Spirit, in the most proper seasons and measures, which, by the means of grace, works the faith, hope, and love in them, which qualified them all for justification, to be had only by perfect

righteousness; and glorification, to be had only in his purchased bliss.

These means of grace I apprehend to be chiefly the word and prayer, and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; for the more effectual application of which, I believe, the great King of the church hath established in it a settled ministry, which he will own and grace to the end of the world.

At the end of the world, I expect a day of universal judgment, in order to which, I certainly look for a resurrection from the dead, and in which I firmly believe an irreversible doom will be pronounced on every man, determining both his soul and his body to the state of felicity or misery the former had assigned it, by a particular judgment, immediately consequent upon his death.

These things past; I believe, the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power; and that they that be wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

This was the confession of his faith. His ordination vows, in answer to the questions solemnly put to him, were likewise very serious and devout, and affecting to the hearers, but too long to be inserted here. However, in the course of his ministry, it was evident he remembered them, and transcribed them into his conversation.

Some of his friends about this time, observing his great studiousness, and the mighty progress he made in learning, and some few of his acquaintance, who had been pupils to Mr. Frankland, who died in 1698, being then destitute of a tutor, earnestly pressed him to undertake the tuition of young men, which he was prevailed with to do. In which part of his work, though his beginning was small, his latter end did greatly increase; so that at the time of his death, he had above thirty under his charge, and more coming.

His good mother had used to be serviceable to her poor neighbours, sometimes in the charitable curing of those who were hurt, or sore, which gave him occasions far beyond his intentions to consult medical books, that he might advise and assist therein, which his quick and active genius soon improved by; so that he got a considerable insight into the practical part of physic, the theory of which he who was so great a master in natural philosophy could be no stranger to. With this he was useful among the poor, and gained both experience and reputation, so that he could not avoid a much larger share of business of that kind than he ever either desired or designed. In the year 1703, he took a journey to Glasgow in Scotland, and there he commenced doctor of physic. The learned men of that university showed him a great respect; he was publicly examined by a convocation of all the heads of the college. Dr. Saintclair, Professor of the Mathematics, who had been operator to the honourable Mr. Boyle, with other physicians, assisted at his examination, and expressed themselves highly satisfied in his abilities. Dr. Kennedy, a famed practitioner, assigned him a case (and it was a case he himself had then in hand) to exhibit a thesis upon, which he did with that accuracy and judgment that gained him a general applause.

His *Diploma* for his degrees, subscribed by all the heads of the College, and sealed with the University Seal, bears date 3° Non Oct. 1703, and gives him a very honourable character. The Vice Chancellor, Dean of the Faculties, and others, treated him very handsomely; and a Synod happening at that time to sit at Glasgow, the members of it gave him the right hand of fellowship, and admitted him to be present at their debates, which gave him an opportunity of declaring upon all occasions, with so much the more assurance, his opinion concerning the government of the church of Scotland, that he thought as they managed it, it was as well fitted to all the true intentions of church government, and as likely to answer them, as any ecclesiastical constitution in the Christian world. He observed, to his great satisfaction, that all the while he was at Glasgow, though he lay in a public inn, he never saw any drunk, nor heard one swear. Nay, he observed that in all the inns on the road in Scotland where he lay, (though some of them mean,) they had family worship duly performed morning and evening: from which, and other remarks, he made in that journey, he inferred that practical religion does not depend upon worldly wealth, for where he had seen the marks of poverty, he had seen withal the marks of piety.

Having taken his degrees in Physic, and his abilities for it being approved, he ventured further into that business than he had done before, and as far as would consist with his other employments; and it pleased God to give him great success therein. Some of the most eminent physicians in that country have done him the honour to say, they found him one of the most ingenuous men in their profession they ever were in consultation with.

In December, 1703, he married Mrs. Grace Yates, daughter of Mr. Thomas Yates of Danford near Whitchurch; a relation that was every way agreeable to him. By her he had two sons; now left in their infancy to the care of that God, who has taken it among the titles of his honour, to be a Father of the fatherless.

Ten years he continued labouring in the word and doctrine at Broad Oak; but in the year 1706, upon the death of that excellent man, Mr. James Owen at Shrewsbury, he was called thither to fill up his place. It was with great reluctance that he entertained the thought of leaving the people he had been

so long with, though it was not many miles from them that he was to remove, and where he might still be many ways serviceable to them: but being very much under the influence of the Rev. Mr. Tallents, who had always been as a father to him; and whose years and wisdom he had a great veneration for, by that he was overruled to go, and at Midsummer, 1706, he settled in Shrewsbury; in a fair way to be greatly and long useful, if Providence had seen fit to continue in this world of ours one who was so great a blessing to it.

That we may do some justice to his memory, and some kindness to ourselves who yet survive, we must consider him both as a minister and a tutor.

I. As a minister; and he was an able minister, ready and mighty in the Scriptures, and one who knew how rightly to divide the word of truth.

1. Let us consider his judgment and insight. He adhered close to the pure gospel of the grace of God in Christ. The doctrine of special grace founded in electing love, and of our justification by the righteousness of Christ only, was what he believed, and preached, and understood, and he knew how to explain, as well as most men. He did not, indeed, trouble his ordinary hearers with nice speculations on these heads; but I find his thoughts concerning the divine decrees delivered at large in two lectures to his pupils, at their request, which they wrote from his mouth. In which I am pleased with the account he gives of the divine decrees from Eph. i. 5. where it is called by the apostle, Ευδοκια τυ θεληματος αυτυ—*the good pleasure of his will.* In God's decree there is,

"Ευδοκια, a compound word: Δοκια, is a clear eternal intuition of that which is most agreeable to himself, most worthy of him, and which will afford him, world without end, an infinite satisfaction in the being and accomplishment of it. Ευδοκια, is a perception that it is right: that all seen together at one view, in their place, order, and connexion, are highly consistent with infinite, eternal, and unchangeable being, power, wisdom, and love."

"Θελημα, a determination in consequence of intuition of himself." He was sure God did not decree sin, nor did he see any necessity of asserting a positive decree to permit sin; nor could he by any means admit a decree to damn any man, but upon the foresight of his being a sinner; but he thought the doctrine of particular, personal, absolute election to eternal life, so plainly revealed in Scripture, that he wondered how any who pretend to regulate their faith by the Bible, should make any doubt of it. He was clear, that it fastened upon the persons in their fallen state, and that it depended indeed upon foreknowledge and foresight, but not of any merit in their faith and repentance, but purely upon the victorious efficacy of divine grace.

In these mysteries he thought religion is not so much concerned to explicate, as to adore.

His thoughts concerning justification, he drew up upon a particular occasion in certain aphorisms, (a method of writing he much used,) which I think may not be amiss to insert at large. He prefixes to them those words: *That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

"1. I apprehend the term of justification, (as well as that of faith, and some others,) is used in a very large sense in Scripture.

2. That large sense is the concurrence of those acts (δικαιωματος) of judicature, that are necessary to entitle, in the estimate of intellectual creatures, to the highest instances of divine favour.

3. These acts must be concluded to at the least; the removal of that which would preclude such a title, and the position of that which would infallibly found it.

4. That which would preclude it, is the guilt of sin.

5. The guilt of sin, is that on the score of which the Governor of the world is obliged to take the course which, in the judgment of intellectual creatures, is a vindication of his own laws and honour.

6. That course can be no other than exacting what the law requires, on supposition of transgression.

7. That which the law required on that supposition was, that the nature that sinned should make satisfaction.

8. Satisfaction is the endurance of such severe penalties by the sinning nature, as may reflect an honour to him that has a right to inflict them, as great as the violation was a dishonour to him.

9. Such satisfaction is righteousness to the nature that offers it.

10. Righteousness is conformity to rule, that is, to law.

11. Conformity is complying with what is enacted.

12. That which is enacted, is disjunctively either the obedience or the suffering of the nature it is prescribed to; so that the nature becomes as righteous by suffering, to that degree which is satisfaction, as by doing.

13. The nature the law was prescribed to, was the human, for the covenant was made with Adam, not only for himself but for his posterity: therefore, (1.) Every one of human nature, (before a state of confirmation,) including the whole nature, at the time of violation in sinning against it, violates it to all his posterity, and brings unrighteousness on it: so did Adam. (2.) If human nature can provide itself with an individual who is capable of satisfaction, that individual (according to law) performs for all the rest, and brings righteousness on them. Therefore,

14. The whole compass of human nature being limited to Adam and Eve, there being no other

individuals at the time of violation, they transgressing, all their progeny were involved, and righteousness is not to be had by the compliance of obedience.

15. Righteousness not being to be had by the compliance of obedience, it is to be had by the compliance of endurance, to that degree that is satisfying.

16. No endurance by human nature, to the degree that is satisfying, that is not infinite.

17. No degree infinite, but either by duration or value.

18. If the degree by duration be resolved on, we perish for ever without righteousness.

19. If therefore we perish not without righteousness, human nature is to furnish out a satisfaction infinite by degree of value.

20. A satisfaction infinite by degree of value, falls not within the compass of human finite nature.

21. Not falling within the compass of it, infinite mercy employs infinite wisdom to contrive the exaltation of that nature, by uniting the second subsistence in the Trinity to an individual of it; and so the Son of God becomes the Son of man.

22. The Son of God, of man, (1 Tim. ii. 5.) is a human person of infinite value.

23. Being so, his sufferings are satisfaction for human nature.

24. Being so, that nature performs the secondary demand of the law.

25. Performing the secondary demand of the law, we are by him conformed to the rule; so that he well deserves to be called, *the Lord our Righteousness.*

26. What he is called, he will be to all who do not renounce him, through an intervening imputation.

27. Imputation, is the admitting the claim of all such to righteousness, because one of the body of beings they belong to has suffered the penalty.

28. This imputation taking place, the governor of the world has sufficient vindication of his own laws and honour, and is not obliged to any thing else in order to the approbation of his government to intellectual creatures, (See Aph. 5.) in what concerns his treatment of man: so the guilt (that would preclude by Aphor. 5.) in the case of those that do not renounce Jesus Christ, is removed.

29. They renounce Christ who peremptorily refuse him the honour of his glorious performance.

30. They peremptorily refuse that honour, who will not submit to the economy God has established in order to his full reward.

31. His full reward, is the exaltation of his person, (Phil. ii. 6—8.) and the salvation of men, Isa. liii. 10, 11.

32. The exaltation of his person, he absolutely expected, John xvii. 5. The salvation of men, only on conditions becoming the government of intellectual creatures.

33. The establishing of such conditions, is the introduction of the evangelical law; the observance of which is the only thing needful in order to the second act of justification. (See Aph. 3.)

34. The excellency of this evangelical law, and the reasonableness of obedience, are to be accounted for in a new set of aphorisms, which may be thus conceived.

(1.) Adam involves all his posterity in guilt, before any of them are born.

(2.) They being so involved, are obnoxious to justice.

(3.) Had justice obtained on them accordingly, it had been *jus—the law*, but it had been *summum jus—the rigour of the law;* and the righteousness of God had been less clear.

(4.) That the righteousness of God might be entirely clear, as it must be when mercy shines with it, it pleased God to place man again into a state of fair trial.

(5.) The contrivance in short was, that Jesus Christ, satisfying, as before, should make a way that God, with the security of his own honour, should propose life and happiness on terms proportioned to the abilities of lapsed creatures.

(6.) These terms are, sincere faith and repentance.

(7.) Faith includes that assent, that is, persuasion, that what the Bible imports, especially concerning Christ, is true; that acceptance, or receiving of Christ for our Prophet, Priest, and King; that is, deriving our notions of our duty and interest from his word, our hopes of pardon from his merit, and our rectitude of practice from his laws; and that affiance, or acquiescence of mind in him, as one able to save to the uttermost, which brings all who are saved to him, as the Being to whom the gathering of the people is to be, and is, consequently, most honourable to him; he so becoming the great Centre on which we all hang, and is most infallibly productive of a holy life; and consequently is, of necessity, preparative for a state of perfect holiness and glory.

(8.) To produce this life, and prepare for this state more certainly, repentance is added to faith, as being a practice most exactly accommodated to the circumstances of imperfect creatures; it bringing the heart daily to God, from whom it is ever starting aside; reducing the warping will to its place; so that though (to use St. Paul's distinction) God has not our flesh, he has our minds; we serve sin with the former, but God with the latter.

(9.) Serving God thus with our minds, we are conformed to the gospel rule, and our service is our evangelical righteousness.

(10.) Being our evangelical righteousness, our

title to the highest instance of divine favour is founded, as well as our precluding guilt removed. See Aph. 2, 3, 20.

(11.) This title being founded, it is tried and admitted at the great day of doom, and sentence passed accordingly.

(12.) The pronouncing of the sentence may be justly reckoned a third act of justification.

(13.) This third act once performed, Christ enjoys for ever the second instance of his reward, Aph. 31.

(14.) Till this be enjoyed, he is satisfied in the sure prospect of it, and in the enjoyment and exercise of the first.

(15.) The exercise of the first secures this glorious issue; it being the administration of the government of both worlds, in consequence of all power both in heaven and earth lodged in his hands.

(16.) One act of the power for which he had special authority, it being a peculiar instance of his reward, and the great proof to this world of his kind reception to the other, was that of the pouring out of the Spirit in extraordinary gifts upon the apostles; in saving ones on all the elect; in common ones, not to say sufficient ones, on all flesh, Acts ii.

(17.) The Spirit, being poured out on all flesh, it is impossible that those who are condemned should bring any imputation on God; they are put on as fair a trial as Adam, had righteousness as much in their reach as he, and perish not for his guilt, but their own."

I must beg my reader's excuse for inserting so long a paper in so short a narrative, but I could not abridge it without spoiling it.

2. Let us consider his management of his ministerial performances.

(1.) He addressed himself to them with great seriousness and gravity, and an humble dependence upon the divine grace. Before the notes of the first sermon he ever preached, he wrote thus: *Tu mihi dux, magne Deus, et manum hanc mentemque dirige, ut salutaria videam, dijudicem, provideam. Nil desperandum Christo duce et auspice Christo.—Great God, be thou my guide, and direct this hand and mind, that I may perceive, distinguish, and provide things which are excellent. Christ being my leader, and Christ my helper, I will despair of nothing.* And that which he wrote as his motto in the beginning of all his sermons, from the very first, which he dated July 6, 1696, to the last, dated February 24, 1707-8, is this, *Ουδεν εγω, παντα Χριστος. I am nothing, Christ is all.* Or sometimes the four first letters, ΟΕΠΧ.

(2.) He had an overflowing fulness of thought and expression in all his performances, and when he spoke off-hand, was never to seek. A florid masculine style was natural to him, which often set him somewhat above the capacity of the more ordinary sort of hearers; but he would frequently explain himself in easier terms, and as he grew in experience, gained a more familiar way of expressing himself.

(3.) He was ready, lively, and fervent both in praying and preaching, and made it appear that he was in good earnest. With what a *παθος—pathos* would he reason with his hearers to persuade them to be religious, and to take pains in religion! Many a time he would say, his heart bled to think how many who profess religion are in danger of being ruined to all eternity by their slothfulness.

(4.) He was very large and full in expounding the Scriptures, and very happy in raising observations from what he expounded; and in his expositions delivered as little of what had been said before, as most men, and yet what was very pertinent.

(5.) In the choice of his subjects he observed a method, which was very profitable to those who constantly sat under his ministry. Soon after he set out in that work, he fell into a method of practical subjects; he showed from several Scriptures what sins are an abomination to God, and what graces and duties are in a special manner pleasing to him. Then he showed how much religion consists in the due discharge of the duties of our particular relations, and went over them very largely. Then he was very particular in showing divers things wherein we must take heed to ourselves, as, [1.] To our design and end of living, from Rom. viii. 13. 1 Cor. x. 31. Ps. iv. 6. Luke x. 42. Ps. lxxiii. 27, 28. [2.] In what concerns our expectation and dependence for strength to attain our end, Isa. xl. 30, 31. [3.] As to our corruptions, Heb. xii. 15. [4.] Our constitution, Matt. v. 29, 30. [5.] Our company, Prov. xiii. 20. [6.] Our calling, Prov. xxiv. 30, &c. 1 Cor. vii. 24. [7.] Our seasons of grace, Luke xix. 42. 2 Cor. ii. 16. [8.] Our sports and delights, Prov. xxi. 17. Ps. xxxvi. 1. [9.] Our tongues, Prov. xviii. 21. Matt. xii. 31, 32. Exod. xx. 7. Isa. lviii. 13, 14. [10.] Our talents, Matt. xxv. 28, 29. [11.] To our possibility of obtaining heaven, 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2. [12.] The necessity of sincerity in seeking it, Job xxvii. 8. Gal. vi. 4.

After he had finished that, he fell into a method of doctrinal subjects, that they might *know the certainty of the words of truth*, (Prov. xxii. 21.) proposing to begin with natural truths, and then proceed to revealed, promising to be plain and distinct; to fetch his thoughts from Scripture and his own experience; to omit controversy, and in points disputed to propose what he thought in his conscience was truth; and in all, to make the work of redemption his great mark.

In this, he aimed to follow the method of his confession of faith at his ordination. From Ps. cxxxix. 14. he showed that we are; that we are made; that we are made by him, all whose works are marvellous. He then proceeded to show, there is a Being who made man, who has all perfections in

himself. What comes from this Being, must needs be good; therefore man was so in his primitive state, (Eccl. vii. 29.) but we see he is otherwise now; yet God has a kindness for man, even to a degree that is saving, 2 Pet. iii. 15. There is a salvation, carrying on in this world (Ps. xcvi. 2.) by the kingdom of God; in which he proposed to show, who is the King; the ever blessed God; and there he largely opened his names, attributes, &c. Then of his kingdom; that of nature; that of grace; that of glory. Of the creation, and the fall, he was exceeding full; and had made some entrance upon the kingdom of restoring grace, when he left Broad Oak, and removed to Shrewsbury, where he preached over the Lord's prayer, and other texts concerning prayer. Then began with the apostles' creed, and was come to the articles of *Jesus Christ our Lord*, when it pleased God to put a period to his life and labours.

(6.) His catechising of the children was very profitable, not only to them but to the whole congregation, and therefore he kept it up constantly every Lord's day in the afternoon. In going over the assembly's Catechism, he taught the children to reduce it into aphorisms; and to begin it thus: "There is a God; this God made man; he made him for some end; his end is to glorify God; (and to glorify God, is to endeavour to do and to obtain that, on the account of which we and other men and angels may know God more, love him more, praise him more, and obey him more, world without end;) he cannot glorify him without a rule; the rule is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament."

(7.) In the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, he was most lively and affectionate; and out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth spoke very much to the purpose. I remember once I was present when he baptized a child, and cannot forget how much he seemed to be himself affected, and with what warm expressions he endeavoured to affect others, with the worth of the soul of that child; that it was an immortal soul, that must live for ever, that must be to eternity either in heaven or hell, and ought accordingly with the utmost seriousness to be dedicated to God through Christ, and to be prayed for by the congregation, and the rather, considering what a theatre of sin and woe this world is, into which it was now born, and in which it was to pass its trials.

(8.) He was observed to be very methodical in his prayers, both in public and in the family. Generally he went over the several parts of prayer in their order, and sometimes said, he could not but look on it as a great mistake, for men to think method and exactness necessary in addresses to men like themselves, and not so in their addresses to the great God. He was also very happy in suiting his prayers to the particular occasions and emergencies as they occurred.

(9.) He came off from his ministerial performances frequently, expressing both the great pleasure he took in the work itself, and the little pleasure he took in his own management of it. As to the former, he has sometimes said, he preferred the delight he enjoyed in praying and preaching, before all the entertainments of sense. "How noble a service," said he, "is it, and how great, to be employed in the publishing of the gospel, and so far to be sent on the same errand with Christ himself!"

As to the latter, so great was his modesty that he could scarce be persuaded ever to think well of any thing he did. He said sometimes, he never came out of the pulpit without trembling to think how poorly he had performed. And when one happened in his hearing to speak well of a sermon of his, he said, "*If you had no better thoughts of my preaching than I, you would never come to hear me.*"

Lastly, We cannot avoid taking some notice of his nonconformity, of which he said little of himself, greater matters filled his head and heart, and therefore we have not much to say of it; only that he had studied the controversy, I believe, as impartially as most men, and without judging others: (*What have I to do to judge another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls:*) and he concluded he could not conform without sin. He had reason enough to do all he could to get over his scruples; for a near relation of his, who knew very well he could make his words good, promised to procure him a presentation to a certain living of the first rate, if he would conform: but his conscience would not suffer him to do it, though by his refusal, he not only lost his preferment, but highly disobliged his friend, who had made him so kind an offer. Nor was that the only considerable offer of that kind that he refused; and, which is more, he not only refused them, but afterwards reflected with much comfort upon his refusal of them; and hesitated not to say sometimes, that he was so well satisfied in the reasons of his nonconformity, that by the grace of God, if he were called to it, he could seal it with his blood.

Yet he was far from bigotry, and heat, and censoriousness in it: he was very free, occasionally, to join in the public service, and had a great deal of charity for those he differed from, as all those will have on both sides, whose thoughts, like his, are free and generous, and taken up with the essentials of religion, and in whom the love of God and their neighbour has the ascendancy.

II. We are next to consider him as a tutor, and here especially lay his excellency; this was that part of his character which we had more particularly in our eye, in attempting to give this representation of him, from the record which divers who had been his pupils were very forward to bear to him, and

the honourable testimonies with which they embalm his memory.

1. Let us consider how well qualified he was for this service, though, when he undertook it, his friends had much ado to convince him that he was in any measure fit for it.

He had a very graceful appearance, a good presence, and a happy mixture both of majesty and mildness, gravity and sweetness, in the air of his countenance, and that which at first view promised something considerable: his voice also was clear and commanding, and very humble; which made him the best precentor either his academy or his congregation could have. And in both psalms were much sung, and admirably well, with great variety and exactness of tunes.

He was richly stocked with all sorts of useful knowledge, and was able with the good householder to bring out of his treasury things new and old; a great deal, both of ancient and modern learning, but especially the products of his own contemplations and reasonings. He was not like an echo, which returns only the sounds it receives, but did himself cultivate and improve what he had learned, made it his own, put it into his own method, dress, and language, and so communicated it to those who were to learn from him. Few tutors dictate more their own thoughts than he did; and though in his performances he showed a great deal of judicious reading, yet they seemed rather the fruit of thinking, deep and close thinking.

In reading lectures he showed himself master of the notions he delivered, and made it appear he had formed an exact scheme of them to himself, which enabled him to lead his pupils into them with such a connexion and chain of thought, and such a powerful conviction, that they have owned themselves strangely surprised with, finding themselves in the light ere they were aware.

He was very happy in a propriety and fluency of expression, as well as in a wonderful acumen and readiness of invention. I believe few men are able to deliver themselves better in set discourses extempore, and off-hand, than he was, either in Latin or English. Divers discourses so delivered, and some of them on the most abstruse points of philosophy and divinity, some of his pupils wrote from his mouth, and they think they have reason to value them as little inferior to studied performances.

Nor did the temper of his mind contribute less to the qualifying of him for this service than his accomplishments in learning. He was of a most tender and affectionate spirit, and was master of the art of obliging. Those who have reason enough to know him, will say of him, that he was familiar, when he pleased, without making himself little; distant, when he saw occasion, without any show of haughtiness; grave without moroseness, and pleasant in its turn without intrenching upon seriousness or manliness, and in his common discourse instructive without pedantry or ostentation. Sure never any man who had the instruction of youth was more affectionately beloved, and yet more truly reverenced, than he was by those under his charge. Such an interest did he gain in their esteem by his prudence and tenderness, that they could easily think every thing he said and did, was well said and well done.

When he had at any time an occasion to show his displeasure, he knew how to do it so as to answer the end, which was to convince and reform; but those who were long with him have said, that they never saw him disturbed with any intemperate heat, nor transported into any indecencies of expression. Prudence, and love, and true merit will command all needful respect and obedience, without the help of passion.

That which highly recommended him to his pupils was, that he was so condescending and easy of access, so respectful to them, and discovered such a tender affection for them, that they say, they know not how to represent it to others to that degree that they ought. He would often propose things to them with a deference even to *their* judgment, and not only allowed, but encouraged, them to offer their objections against the opinions he delivered; and some of them have owned, that in the reflection they have been ashamed to think with what freedom and vehemence they have sometimes disputed against what he had declared to be his opinion, and yet how well he took it.

The pleasure he took in his pupils, showing himself in his element when he was among them, and the tender concern he discovered upon all occasions for their welfare, made him very dear to them. If any of them were sick, how solicitous was he concerning them, and with what affection did he say sometimes, that the life of one of his students was as dear to him as that of his own child; and so he made it appear.

His deadness to this world, and the things of it, added much to his fitness for this service; for that made it easy to him to deny himself in his own ease and interest, and that in very considerable instances, for the satisfaction of his pupils. Under the influence of this principle, he made no difference in his affection to them upon the account of their outward condition: he valued the virtues and good carriage of the poorest, and was displeased at the follies and extravagancies of the greatest; and made both to appear.

2. We are next to consider the method he took with them, and his prudent pious management of them.

(1.) He was much in prayer with them. I put that first, because I look upon it, that the life of re-

ligion lies very much in a constant dependence upon the divine providence and grace, expressed by our acknowledging God, and seeking him in all our studies, all our affairs, and upon all occasions. This he believed, and practised accordingly. Near an hour was spent every morning and every evening in family worship, expounding the Scriptures, singing psalms, and prayer. Immediately after family-worship was concluded in the morning, they went to the lecture room, and he with them; where he again prayed with the students only, giving this reason, that there were many petitions to be put up on their account, which it was not proper for the rest of the family to join in. Then he read a portion of Scripture to them in a peculiar method, (for some time out of Dr. Gastrell's Christian Institutes,) and with great concern and holy fervency committed the students and their studies to God, begging a blessing on the endeavours of that day. If any thing happened to put off this exercise a little from its time, yet he never failed to perform it afterwards, before he began to read his lectures.

When any came first to him, he prayed for them; when any left him, he prayed particularly for them; when he had occasion to give any of them a solemn reproof or admonition, he followed it with prayer.

(2.) He took pains to compose many learned pieces in Latin, for the service of his pupils, to make up what he thought was deficient in the books put into their hands.

One he called Schematismus, being a scheme of the several disciplines in their natural order; Gnostologia first, containing the Præcognita; then Logic, Metaphysics, Physics, Mathematics; and lastly, Ethics; showing the nature and use of each, their dependence upon, and their serviceableness to, one another. In this he presented the young travellers with a general map of the country they were to survey; and there were some of his pupils who had in other places made considerable progress in the disciplines, who owned themselves indebted to that piece, especially as he opened it to them, for their acquaintance with the true use of philosophy, the order of its several parts, and the mutual relation they bore to each other.

He also compiled a large system of Elenctic Logic; in which he showed himself as well acquainted with the depths as with the niceties of that art.

There is another science, which he thought had been least cultivated by the learned, and yet as well deserved their pains as any other, and that is, Pneumatics; he began a large system of this science, which he had a peculiar affection for, his genius leading him to abstract speculations, and made some progress in it a little before he died; as if his close application of mind to the nature of spirits, were a presage of his own removal quickly to the world of spirits, short of which his intense inquiries concerning them could meet with no satisfaction. Had he lived to finish that work, and could he then have been persuaded to publish it, we have reason to think it would have been both acceptable and serviceable to the learned world.

(3.) He took a great deal of pains in reading lectures to his pupils in their several classes every day; which he did with so much clearness and fulness, and, withal, with so much pleasantness and variety, intermixing such entertaining stories with that which seemed jejune or crabbed, that their attendance on them was a constant pleasure, and not a task; and though he was long, he never seemed tedious.

He had a particular concern to have them well grounded in Logic, both didactic and elenctic, and spent more time with them than most tutors do in that part of learning, which teaches us how to direct our thoughts, so that we may find out truth more readily, and express it more pertinently.

And for the improvement of the reasoning faculty, he pressed his pupils very much to the study of pure Mathematics, as that which fixes the mind, and pleases it with those demonstrations which are the result of its searches.

He was a great master in natural philosophy; and though he lived in obscurity, out of the road of books and conversation, yet he found means to acquaint himself with the modern discoveries and improvements in that and the other sciences. Between himself and his pupils, he took care to preserve a freedom of thought; comparing the several schemes and hypotheses together, with a generous indifference to them, and a diligent impartial search after truth, as far as it might be collected from them all.

His pupils observed him to be very curious in his choice of apposite expressions, for the illustrating of what he delivered to them; and that he would sometimes go back to change a word or phrase, if another occurred to his thoughts more expressive. He commonly laid down his instructions in short aphorisms chained together, by which he set both his own and others' notions in a clear light, and oftentimes decided some of the most difficult controversies, by a plain stating of them.

(4.) He formed all his notions in divinity purely by the word of God, the Bible was the system he read, and the genuine expositions of that he thought the most profitable divinity lectures he could read to his pupils; to that only he was devoted, and not to any man's hypothesis. He called no man master upon earth, but proved all things by the law and the testimony; nor would he himself be called *Rabbi*, but proposed all his notions to be impartially examined by the same touchstone.

For the methodising their divinity studies, he made use of the Assembly's Confession of Faith, and Amesius's Medulla, and some other systems. Mr. How was an author he much admired, and his

Living Temple, a book he read to his students, and obliged them to be conversant with; making it his great care to establish them in the first principles of the oracles of God, and to fill their minds with them, which he looked upon as the best expedient to fortify them against the two pernicious extremes, of scepticism on the one hand, and bigotry on the other.

(5.) He maintained a very strict and steady government of his little academy; which he modelled as near as he could to the constitution of the College at Glasgow, which he much admired. *Sic parvis componere magna solebat—Thus was he accustomed to compare great things with small.* He took care they should employ their morning hours well, and take time for their secret devotions, being always jealous lest any other studies should encroach upon them.

He obliged them to great diligence in the hours set apart for study, and restrained them at other times from recreations which he thought any way unbecoming them.

Those that he found not so quick in taking things, as others are, he did not discourage; but took pains to bring them up as they were able.

If he observed any of them to be remiss in their studies, or that took any false steps in their conversation, how faithfully, and yet how tenderly, would he deal with them for their reformation. He had an excellent art in his discourses to them, when they were together, of saying that which obliged them to reprove themselves; and they were sensible of it, and oftentimes he gained his point that way, and saved both himself and them the uneasiness of a particular reproof: but when there was occasion for a close and personal admonition, he gave it with an affecting solemnity, and in such a way as showed not his anger so much as his love, and evidenced that he delighted not to shame, no, not the delinquents; but as his beloved sons, he warned them. He often mingled tears with his reproofs, and expostulated with so much reason and tender affection, as sometimes drew tears also even from those who were not apt in that manner to relent. He commonly followed the reproofs he gave with solemn prayer to God for a blessing upon them: and with some who were under his charge, he saw great success of his endeavours this way, not only to his own satisfaction, but to the admiration of others, and endearing of himself, even to those with whom he thus dealt faithfully.

(6.) He was himself a great example of serious piety, and very solicitous to promote the eternal salvation of the souls of those under his charge. The beauty of holiness was indeed the beauty of his whole management, and the heavenliness of his conversation was the great ornament of it. With what seriousness and affection did he discourse of another world, and how indifferent was he to the little affairs of this. What savoury expressions would drop from him, and how awfully would he speak of the things that are not seen, that are eternal. How would he spiritualize common occurrences; and when he was reading lectures to the students upon the works of nature, how would he take occasion from them, to observe with a pious reverence, the wisdom, power, and goodness of the God of nature.

When he was speaking of the mysteries of redemption, the love of Christ, and the glory of the blessed, he was sometimes carried out even beyond himself, in the admiring contemplation of those heights and depths; and so, as even to forget that he was in the body. These were his beloved topics, and which he took all occasions to enlarge upon with *Juvat usque morari—Here it delights me to dwell.*

He was desirous to kindle, preserve, and inflame the same holy fire in the hearts of his pupils. How pathetically would he press upon them the great concerns of another world, and choose out words to reason with them about the one thing needful, commonly addressing them thus: "My dear charge," (telling them oft,) "if any thing I can do will but promote your spiritual and eternal welfare, how happy shall I think myself. If what I say may abide with any of you to do your souls good, I have my aim."

Two very hopeful young men he buried out of his family after he came to Shrewsbury, who died of the small-pox; and a third, who died of a consumption. This touched him in a very tender part, and lay heavy upon his spirit a great while. How did he humble himself before God, and kiss the rod, and bewail sin, as that which provoked God thus to contend with him. With what pathetical expressions of submission did he resign himself, and all that was dear to him, to the holy will of God. *It is the Lord, let him do what he will.* And how solicitous was he to improve those providences for the spiritual benefit of those who did survive; dealing with them in private (besides his public funeral discourses on those occasions) from Job xiv. 2. *He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down.* And Eccl. xi. 8, 9. *Remember the days of darkness.* Yet how did he comfort himself and others with this, that however it be, yet God is good. *It is well,* 2 Kings iv. 26. However, it shall be well; it shall end well, everlastingly well. Often repeating with much affection:

Ἐσται παντα καλως—*All things shall be done rightly.*

*Est bene, non potuit dicere; dixit, Erit—When he could not say, It is well, he said, It shall be well.*

Fetching comfort likewise from 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. That God has *made with us an everlasting covenant.* And much affected his young men were with a sermon he preached to them in the family, when they came back from the funeral of one of the young men that was buried a little way off in the country, on Luke xxiv. 52. *And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* Encouraging himself and them with this, that in heaven we hope to meet, and never part.

They also remember, when soon after another of his pupils was so ill of a fever, that his life was by all despaired of, and it was expected he would in a few hours breathe his last, the doctor called them all together to join in prayer for him, and with a more than ordinary earnestness wrestled with God for his life; and God gave him an answer of peace immediately; for when they returned to him after prayer, they found such a wonderful change in him, as was the beginning of his recovery; for which abundant thanksgivings were rendered to God. But his joy on that occasion met with a great allay; for the young man's father, Mr. Pike, a worthy minister at Burton upon Trent, who came to be with his son in his illness, when he went away comforted in his recovery, took the infection of the fever with him, of which presently upon his return home he sickened, and died in a few days, to the great loss of that town and country; for he was a very zealous good man, a lively affectionate preacher, and one who laid out himself very much to do good.

(7.) Those of his young men who were designed for the ministry, and were drawing near to that sacred employment, he took pains with to possess them with a very deep sense of the awfulness of that function, and the weight of that work they had before them; often proposing to their consideration, the preciousness of all immortal souls, the imminent danger most are in of perishing eternally, and the great account the minister would have to give concerning them; inferring thence, what an earnest care ministers ought to have in their hearts of them, 2 Cor. viii. 16.

That he might make them ready in the Scriptures, he obliged those who wrote daily expositions, once a week to repeat what they had written; and the divinity class in their turns, once a week, analysed or expounded a portion of Scripture themselves.

That he might train them up in the exercise of the gift of prayer, every night after he had performed family worship, the students were all to retire to the lecture room, and one of them prayed, each in his turn, besides the more retired services of every chamber. Thus were they trained up to pray always, with all prayer.

In all their performances, he much pressed it upon them to be accurate and exact, both in method and language; and had times of employing them in the polite exercises of oratory and poetry.

He likewise set some time apart every week for the regulating and directing of their elocution and pronunciation; about which he was very solicitous. He ordered each to read some paragraphs in authors most noted for good language; after which, by his own example, he showed them wherein they were defective, or had missed the right pause or emphasis; and an excellent faculty he had at exposing and regulating an odd tone or gesture, to the advantage of the student, without giving offence.

(8.) He took care to possess his pupils with the principles of Christian charity and moderation, and to arm them against bigotry. He was no party man himself, nor would he make them such. One who had been a great while his pupil, writes to me to this purpose; that his tutor understood the passions of the mind so well, and had so great an art in managing tempers so as to gain his point, that, if he had designed it, he could easily have sent out flaming bigots; but he was too much a Christian, a gentleman, and a scholar, to be swallowed up in the violences of any party. His aim was, to make them men of sense, and catholic Christians; and if they fell short of being such, it was not his fault. He adds, "How hard it is, that when, on the one side, such noble, beneficial, and heavenly principles of love and moderation, and particularly, a candid temper toward the Church of England, are in the academies of dissenters so studiously infused and encouraged, there should be on the other side such pains taken, and all the arts of misrepresentation used, to render the dissenters contemptible and odious, and men not fit to be tolerated. But let us not be weary of rendering good for evil thus; for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not."

And observing, that the dissenters' academies are by some most maliciously calumniated, as nurseries of rebellion and sedition, and hurtful to kings and provinces; he adds, that what insight the doctor thought fit to give his pupils into politics, tended to beget in them, not only a satisfaction in, but an admiration of, the established constitution of the English government, and he doubted not, but they brought with them, from his instructions, a true value for monarchy, and as thorough an abhorrence of the execrable murder of King Charles I. as they could have brought from Christ Church itself.

As to his practice of physic we have not much to observe, but when he was a youth his genius led him strangely that way; and he loved to learn medicinal receipts, and had them very ready when he met with any occasion for them. When he fell into that business, he soon found it fatigued him much, both in body and mind; and he would gladly have left it off, but thought he could not in conscience refuse to assist those whom he saw in peril, who earnestly begged his advice; and who would not make use of any other, or could not be at the charge of it. To the poor he commonly gave not only his advice, but their physic too, gratis, or money to pay the apothecary. It gave him likewise an opportunity of reproving, counselling, and comforting the sick, and of praying with them.

Luke the evangelist was a physician, a *beloved physician*, and so was he. In all the places where he lived, and the relations wherein he stood, he was

beloved. When he was at school at Wirksworth, he was the darling both of the school and of the town, for the sweetness of his temper, his piety and ingenuity, and his obliging readiness to be serviceable according to his capacity to every body; and when he had finished his time there, and was sent for home, his schoolmaster, Mr. Ogden, wept to part with him, and said, he knew not what would become of his school when he was gone.

When he was a student at Glasgow, he was universally respected there for his great learning, diligence, and seriousness; and when he took his Master's degree, the senate of the academy did him the honour to make him president of all who were laureated that year; an honour seldom or never done to any but one of their own nation. He acquitted himself so well in that place, that when he was to take his leave, the regents courted his stay, and promised him preferment there; but he longed after his father's house, for there he was a great example of filial affection and respect; his parents were no less dear to him than he was to them, and there was nothing he studied more than in every thing to have them easy.

When he went to school in Derbyshire at fifteen years of age, he left a paper which was found after he was gone, expressing his great thankfulness to his parents for the care they had taken of his education, begging their prayers for him, and that they would not be inordinate in their affection to him, and if sickness and death should betide him, not to mourn for him as having no hope, for he knew it would be well with him living and dying. His letters to his parents, both from Wirksworth and Glasgow, as they evidence much of the power of the grace of God upon his spirit, a constant regard to God, and dependence upon him, and an earnest desire to serve the will of God in his generation, so they express a very great tenderness of them, and of their comfort and satisfaction.

He was as a father to his brothers and sisters, and very beneficial to all round about him; so much did holiness and love shine in his conversation, and so diffusive were the influences of both, that the good people of the neighbourhood would sometimes call his house the "suburbs of heaven." He gave Bibles and other good books to many, with a charge to read them diligently, and allowed yearly money to a poor man in the neighbourhood to teach so many poor children to read; with a strict obligation that none should know who did it. He was always careful not to give offence to any, very moderate in his opinions, and charitable in his thoughts and expressions concerning those he differed from, which gained him great respect from all sorts of people; and justly was he the more honoured by others, because he had always mean thoughts of himself, and was seldom satisfied with any performance of his own; still saying, "It might have been better done by myself, but much better done by another."

Well, all this had a pleasing aspect; to see so much of the light and love of the upper world shining in this lower region; and to see it in a man of strength and vigour, in the midst of his days, gave us a pleasing prospect, both of his further advances in proportion to his continued progress; and his long usefulness in his generation; but, alas! we must take the treasure of divine light as it is given us, in earthen vessels, in china dishes, which do not wear out gradually, but often break of a sudden, without any previous decay: so it was here.

The Doctor's constitution seemed firm enough, but I believe he had done himself a prejudice by studying in the night, and sitting up very late, often a great while after midnight. A great scholar once said, he would willingly lose the learning he had got, upon condition he could recover the health he had lost by night studies. After he began to practise physic, that obliged him often to read late, which I believe did him no good.

But notwithstanding the strength of his constitution, he had himself an apprehension that he should not be long-lived. When it was urged by some of his friends to spare himself, he used to answer, that he believed he had but a very little time to live, and he was willing to spend it to the best purpose. When he was pleasing himself with the comfortable circumstances he was in, and particularly the great agreeableness of his dear yoke-fellow; he would say, "Well, this is not likely to continue long, we must expect a change." This apprehension grew upon him, and he frequently spoke of it; it was but a little time before he sickened, that he solemnly declared to some of his friends, that he looked upon death to be very near; adding, that he saw impiety come to such a height in this nation, that he feared some sore judgment would shortly come upon it, which God in mercy prevent.

He met with a French book which gave an account of the last hours of a young lady, a protestant, of sixteen years of age, not named, who died in France, with high expressions of holy joy and triumph: the book is entitled, "Edifying Death." He was so pleased with it upon the reading of it, that he translated it out of French into English, and just finished it a day or two before he sickened; it is since his death printed at Shrewsbury, in three or four sheets.

After he came to Shrewsbury, he had not his health so well as he had in the country; was frequently indisposed with cold, but never under any threatening symptoms.

On Monday, February, 23, 1707-8, he complained a little of a pain in his head and back; however, he sat down to dinner with his students, as usual, after he had done his morning work, but he ate very little; for it happened just before he sat down, that

one of the young men showed him a paper then newly published, of reflections upon the grand jury's presentment of the book called, "The Rights of the Christian Church," from which he took occasion all dinner time, and a good while after, to inveigh against that book, and to warn his pupils against the pernicious principles of it, with a more than ordinary warmth.

Though he continued not well, yet on Tuesday he studied and preached publicly the week-day lecture, on Matt. iv. 10. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*; he apprehended his distemper to be a slight intermitting fever, which would soon wear off, especially with the use of bark.

On Wednesday he gave a lecture to one class, but excused himself from the rest because of his indisposition, and walked out a little that afternoon; but it was with difficulty that he got home.

On Thursday and Friday he did not seem to be much worse, but prayed with his family even on Friday night, and was observed to be very particular, and asserting in his requests to God, that they might all be prepared for death and judgment.

On Saturday he confined himself to his chamber, yet did not seem to apprehend himself in any danger, nor did those about him.

On Monday some very good advice was had, and means used. His distemper was apprehended to be a nervous fever, and malignant; but seemed not to come to any extremity.

On Tuesday evening he sat up till almost bed-time, and having slept a little in his chair, when he waked, he said he had heard extraordinary music, far beyond what he had ever heard in his life. That was the first thing which gave those about him an alarm of his danger, for then it seemed that his distemper began to affect his head: next morning he became extremely delirious, so that he knew not those about him. A piteous case, that a soul of such great capacities and attainments, and now just ready to take wing to the world of perfect and everlasting light, should merely by a bodily distemper be put into such confusion as his was; and disabled to discover itself, as otherwise it certainly would have done, to the glory of God, and the edification of others. May his living words be duly remembered and improved, for we have none of his dying words to keep account of.

Notwithstanding his delirium he slept much, and so sweetly on Thursday evening, that it was hoped it would do him good, but between ten and eleven o'clock that evening, (March 4,) he waked in an agony, and breathed his last within a few minutes; his aspiring soul hastening as it were out of a body, which not only, as always, detained him from the vision of God in the other world, (for *while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord,*) but now disabled him from the service of God here; and what soul like his could bear to be any longer so fettered?

What a house of mourning was his made that dismal night; what deep impressions this sudden stroke made upon his dear charge (as he used to call them) I cannot express, and I hope they will not forget. Sure he lived as much desired, and died as much lamented, as most men.

His remains were attended to the grave on Monday following, March 8, with universal lamentation. He was buried in St. Chad's church in Shrewsbury, close by the grave in which the worthy Mr. James Owen was buried not two years before. Immediately after the body was interred, a funeral sermon was preached in his own meeting-place to a numerous congregation of true mourners.

I must conclude this sad account, as Mr. Fox does the history of the death of the Lady Jane Grey:

*Tu, quibus, ista legas incertum est, Lector! ocellis;*
*Ipse quidem, siccis, scribere non potui.*

*I know not, reader, whether thou canst read this without a tear; I can assure thee that it was not written without* many *tears.*

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*Inscription on his Tombstone.*

SAMUEL BENION, V. D. M. & M. D.

Whicksoliæ in Agro Salopiensi Natus, Collegii Glasguensis olim Alumnus, Quando Corpus suum huc demisit. Animam puram, piam, et modestam, Terrenis defæcatam, et Cœlestibus plenam, Omnigenâ Literaturâ alte imbutam.

Gloriæ Dei.

In Concionando Evangelium,
Erudiendo Juventutem Studiosam,
Et Curando Ægrotos,
Integre dicatum;
Non tantum suis, sed et omnibus charum;
In Christi Manus placide commisit.
*Mar.* 4. 170$\frac{7}{8}$
*Ætat. Suæ* 35.

SAMUEL BENION, V. D. M. and M. D.*

Born at Whicksol in Shropshire, educated in the University of Glasgow, died in this town. He was pious, modest, and profoundly learned, abstracted from the world; his mind was pure and heavenly. Wholly devoted to the preaching of the gospel, the instructing of studious youth, and the healing of the sick; doing all to the glory of God. Dear to his friends, and to all besides. He committed himself with devout tranquillity into the hands of Christ, March 4, 170$\frac{7}{8}$, in the 35th year of his age.

* Minister of the Word of God, and Doctor of Physic.

# A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

## FUNERAL OF THE REV. MR. FRANCIS TALLENTS,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN SHREWSBURY.

WITH A SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND DEATH.

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JUDE 21.

*Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

HAD I been left at liberty to choose my subject on this sad and solemn occasion, I should certainly have pitched upon some text or other that would have led me to show what a great man (I might say, a prince and a great man, for such men as he, who have wrestled and prevailed in prayer, are Israel's *princes with* God) is fallen this day in our tribe, and what a great loss we have of him; some text that would have been proper to affect us with sorrow for the breach made upon us, which cannot but touch us the more sensibly, because we have been so lately wounded again and again in the same tender part. Though we have a great deal of reason with thankfulness to acknowledge the benignity of Providence, in continuing such a great blessing as his life was so long to us, yet his capacity for further usefulness being also wonderfully prolonged, we ought to look upon his removal as a further token of God's displeasure against us, and to lament it with a holy fear. Jacob's family so greatly lamented the death of Rebekah's nurse, who could not but be very old, that the place where they buried her was called *Allon-bachuth—The Oak of weeping*, Gen. xxxv. 8. What a large debt of grateful and honourable tears is owing then to one who has been so long a spiritual father and nurse in Christ's family! The longer we enjoy good men, the more we should love and honour what we see of Christ in them, and the greater loss we should account their removal from us. I should certainly raise up your mourning, could I but be instrumental to stir up your graces; your love to God and his image, your zeal for Christ and his kingdom: these would engage your mourning for the death of one who bore so much of God's image, and did so much good service to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom among men in his day.

The notice God took of the death of Moses, *Moses my servant is dead*, Josh. i. 2. might probably have been my subject; and the rather, because, like Moses, in his advanced years, his eyes scarce waxed dim; and at length, like him, he died at the mouth of the Lord, Deut. xxxiv. 5. Or, Elisha's lamentation for Elijah's departure, which, for my own part, I have reason to take up, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.* Or Christ's character of John Baptist might well have suited the occasion, *He was a burning and a shining light.* Nay, age being a crown of glory; the old age of such a one, who continued in his usefulness to the last, being a diadem of beauty to all his friends, one whose days spoke so well, and the multitude of whose years taught so much wisdom; it had been no solecism, to have applied to ourselves the lamenting prophet's words, *The crown is fallen from our heads; woe unto us, for we have sinned.*

But our reverend father, seeking your edification, and not his own honour, has appointed the text now read to you to be the subject of my thoughts and yours at this time. He mentioned it to me a year or two ago, as that which he desired might be preached upon at his funeral, laying the emphasis upon the word *mercy: Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* For (said he) all my hopes of eternal life are built purely upon the mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ. I have nothing else to trust to. So that by this text, he being dead, yet speaketh. Hear, and your soul shall live.

Many and many a good word he has spoken to you in God's name, as feelingly and affectionately,

as much from the heart, and discovering as much of a natural care for your estate, as most men I ever heard; now take this as his dying word; and dying words should make living and lasting impressions: take it as his last farewell; his legacy (I may call it) to this congregation, and a valuable legacy it is. After he had been 56 or 57 years labouring among you in the word and doctrine, as opportunity favoured, with this word he breathes his last; this text he lives and dies by, it is his *Consummatum est*, and finishing his course, with it he finishes his testimony. Would you have the conclusion of the whole matter, and whatever you forget, will you be sure to remember that it is this, *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus to eternal life.* O that you and I might hear attentively the instructions of it, might hear them from the grave, though it be a land of silence; might hear them from heaven, not as the word of dying men, but of the living God, who has directed us not only what we must do, but what we may expect. Let the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be always before our eyes, and let the believing expectation of it fill our souls, be inlaid there: let these words be written on the tables of our hearts, as with a pen of iron, and with a point of a diamond, *Looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

I took it for granted that our deceased father, in the choice of this text, designed these two things;

I. To express the workings of his own heart, his own sentiments and devout affections, and to let you know that he for his part was a believing expectant of eternal life, and a believing dependant on Christ and his mercy for it, and continued so to the last, and had not changed his mind.

II. To impress the like on your hearts, and to engage and encourage you with the same things with which he found himself encouraged and engaged: he would have you also stirred up to seek for eternal life in Christ's mercy, and to seek till you find. He seemed desirous with the last blaze of his expiring lamp, if it might be, by the grace of God, (that blessed heavenly fire,) to kindle the same pious affections in you that his own heart was inflamed with. O that I had more of his spirit! then I could the better lay before you his thoughts that took rise from these words. I have looked upon it as none of the least of the blessings of my life, that ever since I was capable of it, I have been more or less at times made happy with his conversation, and many an hour have spent, abundantly to my satisfaction, in fellowship with him; and as it was his condescension, so it was my advantage, that he was very communicative of his observations and experiences, in all his discourses full of Christ, and another world; so that I never parted from him, but I might have been the wiser and better for my being with him, and as much from him as perhaps from any friend I ever had, might have learned both discretion and devotion, that is, how to converse both with God and man. But if the countenance has for a while been sharpened by such a friend, as iron is with iron, alas, it grows dull again, and we want that liveliness when we have occasion for it. O that the blessed Spirit of God would bring this word home to my heart and yours, would open our understandings, and make our hearts to burn within us, so that from this precious line of sacred writ we may gather now, and lay up for a time of need, that honey which I believe this blessed servant of God did in his own meditations suck from it, and may experience the same relish and power of it which we have reason to think he had the pleasure of. The Scripture is a full fountain, out of which we may draw as much water, and with as much joy, as others who have gone before us, who have recommended it to us to be our guide and stay, as it has been theirs. Streams from this rock followed them through this wilderness to Canaan, where the water will be turned into wine; and they will not fail us, nor be to us as the brooks in summer, if we be not wanting to ourselves.

I. then, Let us consider this text, as recommended to us with the design, to express this good man's believing hope and expectation of eternal life, through the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Having lived in faith, thus he died in faith, seeing the promised land afar off, but embracing the promise of it as faithful, and worthy of all acceptation, very sure, and very precious; dying with the promise in his arms, and the life promised in his eye. This reason, this account he gives of the hope that was in him, with meekness and fear; that he hoped *for* eternal life, and hoped *in* the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring him to it; and that this hope was to him as an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast, entering before into that within the vail, whither he himself is now entered.

It is the privilege and happiness of dying Christians, that they can look with ease and satisfaction on the other side death and the grave; can see firm land, and a good land, beyond that rough and stormy sea, and this enables them to look death in the face, and to look down into the chambers of darkness, without change of countenance. They know not only whence death's commission comes, from their Father's hand, but whither it will bring them, to their Father's house, where they long to be. Dying is not to them as it is to atheists and infidels, "a great leap in the dark." No marvel, if from one who knows not, or receives not, divine revelation, we hear sad complaints of uncertainty, and how much the departing soul is at a loss: *Dubius vixi, anxius morior, quo vadam nescio—I have lived in doubt, I die in anxiety, whither I am going I know not*, said one; *Animula vagula blandula, quæ nunc abibis in loca*

—*O my poor soul, whither art thou now going*, said another. And we have been lately told, that Mr. Hobbes, (that, Leviathan, that crooked serpent,) when, notwithstanding the vain hopes he had flattered himself with, that though old he should yet live a while, he was told, that he could not continue long, wished, "O that I could now find a hole at which to creep out of this world!"* But they who by faith build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and are united to Christ, the chief cornerstone, have a holy humble confidence towards God in a dying hour, and having put themselves under a divine conduct, can easily leave the land of their nativity, in prospect of the better country, that is, the heavenly; and though, like their father Abraham, they go out not knowing whither they go, yet, like him, they go out with cheerfulness, knowing whom they follow, and being assured that he will show them the path of life. And though they cannot particularly describe the future bliss, which is a glory to be revealed, yet they are sure that it is enough to make them perfectly and eternally happy. And knowing whom they have trusted with all the concerns of their felicity, even the same whom the Father has trusted with all the concerns of his glory, they know very well *he is able to keep what they have committed to him unto that day*, when it shall be called for; and be ready to receive that spirit, which they then resign to him, and trust him with. In the assurance of this, they can walk with a holy security through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing no evil after death, and therefore fearing none in death.

Let this be observed to the honour of the Christian religion, and the everlasting gospel, on which it is founded, that thence are fetched such substantial powerful antidotes against the fear of death, as the best of the heathen moralists could never offer. The Platonists sometimes called their philosophy *Meditatio mortis—Meditation on death*, and taught their disciples to think of death; but they could not teach them to triumph over it, as our religion teaches us, *O death, where is thy sting?* Let it also be observed for our encouragement to diligence and constancy in the work of God, that so we shall have not only an entrance, but an *abundant entrance, into the everlasting kingdom*. What is there in death to be dreaded, when it is only our passage to that eternal life, which through the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ we are looking and longing for.

And as it is the happiness of dying Christians, that they have the hope of eternal life to stay themselves upon in that darksome valley, so it will be for the glory of God, and the edification of others, if they tell what God has done for their souls, and leave behind them a testimony to the sufficiency of the divine promise and grace from their own experience. Some, perhaps, may be invited into the ways of religion, many, however, will be encouraged therein, when they see and hear with what ease and cheerfulness those who have been long walking in these good ways leave the world in expectation of the blessed hope. Some have thought it no less than a debt which at least the old disciples of Christ owe to those about them, to communicate to them the comforts wherewith they are comforted of God, in the believing prospects of the glory to be revealed. *I believed, therefore have I spoken.* Our deceased father has thus encouraged us to go on in the way of God, by intimating to us, that he found abundant comfort and support under the apprehensions of death approaching, in depending upon the mercy of Christ, and looking for eternal life through him.

When he intimated his mind that I should preach his funeral sermon, he added, that he would not have me to praise him; but,

I hope it will be no violation of that part of his charge, to take notice even of that prohibition to his honour, his great honour; the very mention of it (and I am obliged to mention it, because otherwise it might justly be expected, that I should have spoken largely concerning his character) turns to his praise; and my silence so restrained speaks aloud, that he was one of those humble in spirit whom honour will uphold; one who sought not his own glory, nor cared to have a trumpet sounded after him, any more than before him, *Digito monstrari, et dicier hic est—pointing him out with the finger, and saying, This is the man*; but would rather do what was praiseworthy than be praised for it. By this it appeared, that he endeavoured to approve himself to God, and was therefore dead to, and looked with contempt upon, the applause and commendation of men; and that he lived a life of sincere repentance and self-judging, as the best Christians do; and was far from being like Saul, who, even when he owned his guilt to Samuel, saying, *I have sinned*, added in the next breath, *yet honour me now before the elders of my people*, 1 Sam. xv. 30. And that he was one of those Christians inwardly, whose praise is not of men, not courted or desired of men, but of God, and who make sure a witness in heaven, and a record on high, and then reckons it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment. Herein let us be followers of him, as he was of Christ: let us not search our own glory, for it is vain glory, nay, it is not glory, it is glory that will be turned into shame; but let us with a single eye aim at God's glory, and then that will reflect true glory upon us, and everlasting.

He who does but act a part in religion, may conclude as that heathen emperor did, with *Valete et plaudite—Prosper and applaud*, the language of the

* Dr. Kennet's account of the D. of Devon's family.

stage; but he whose heart is upright with God, though he reckons a good name better than precious ointment, especially that at the day of one's death, yet he is so intent upon his acceptance with God, that the other is as nothing to him; well knowing, that true honour after death arises not from men's eulogiums, but from Christ's *Euge—commendation:* if our Master say, *Well done*, the matter is not great what our fellow-servants say.

Nor will it (I hope) be any violation of his charge to leave it to his own works to praise him in the gates; they do it, they will do it, further and longer than any thing I can say will. Generations to come will mention him with honour, for his View of Universal History, that copious comprehensive work, which takes in all the generals, and in a manner touches most of the particulars, that have swelled the numerous volumes of historians; sure never was so much learning, so much reading, crowded into so little a compass; never was one page in two columns so well filled: it is a work confessedly exact and elaborate, and of general and of lasting use. Let that vast performance praise him for his knowledge, judgment, and great industry.

Let his Sure and Large Foundations, his History of Schism, and the Defence of it, praise him for his catholic charity and moderation, and that healing temper which, as far as it prevails and has the ascendency, will extinguish heats, accommodate differences among Christians, and bring and keep good people together in love; conformable to the design of our blessed Redeemer, who died that he might gather together in one the children of God, who under several denominations were scattered abroad.

But besides these works of his, I hope the good success of his ministry in this place will praise him, and the remaining fruit of it will be his honour, as well as your comfort and advantage. Recollect what you have heard from him, and live it over. You have fully known his doctrine, manner of life, faith, charity, patience; continue therefore in those things which you have learned, and have been assured of, knowing that you have learned them of one who well understood them himself, and with a very tender concern for your souls pressed them upon you. Abound therefore in the fruits of righteousness, and so commend your keeping; make it appear you have been well fed with the bread of life, and nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine, by your holy heavenly conversations, your sobriety, justice, charity, meekness, humility, and exemplary walking in every thing, which will be an ornament to your profession, and the standing praise of your ministers who are gone; whose good preaching will best survive them, and be best attested, in your good living. If at any time you are tempted to do an ill thing, remember you have not so learned Christ, but have been better taught the truth as it is in Jesus. If I may not praise him who is gone, thus you may, and others, who thus see your light shine before men, will glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Though I may not praise him, yet I hope I may put you upon praising God for him. Men, the greatest and best of men, are but what the grace of God makes them; all their light they borrow from the Father of lights, all their oil from the good olive. They are ready to own it themselves, *By the grace of God, I am what I am; I live, yet not I; I laboured, yet not I:* now, if we give the glory of that grace to him from whom it is derived, and to whom the praise of it belongs, whatever honour that reflects at second-hand on the chosen instruments of that grace, we do but our duty. St. Paul never flattered his friends, yet we often find him thanking God for their faith and hope, their love and patience, nor did he court their applauses of him, he was far from it; yet he desired that thanks might be given by many in his behalf, for what God enabled him to do and suffer in his cause. That just praise of men turns to a good account, which makes God its centre, and runs up all the streams to the fountain. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*

You of this congregation have reason to bless God for your ministers, for their gifts, and graces, and serviceableness to you. *Glorify the God of Israel*, who has given such power unto men, and gave men of such power to you. When you reflect with a melancholy thought, upon those dark providences which have of late removed from your head two faithful ministers in the midst of their days, and great usefulness, take occasion thence to bless God for that kind and gracious providence which continued one among you to a good old age, and continued him in his usefulness to the last. Thus God has tried you with a variety of instruments; you have at the same time been blessed with the gravity and authority of a Paul, *the aged*, and with the vigour and liveliness of a Timothy, who, *as a son with the father, served with him in the gospel.* Each age has its advantage; if both have been advantageous to you, you have a great deal to be thankful for; if neither, you have a great deal to answer for. But whether they who piped unto you, or they who mourned, have gained their point, or no, *Wisdom will be justified of her children.*

The sons of the prophets have reason to bless God, that ever they had such a father, such a guide, such a counsellor, such an example: I am sure I have, who am less than the least of them. May the mantle of this Elijah clothe those who are left behind, that we may walk in the same spirit, walk in the same steps; and that we may show forth the thankfulness of our hearts by the conformity of our

lives to that holy religion, wherein we have been instructed by those who were the guides of our youth, and by our steady and constant adherence to the gospel of the grace, the free grace, of God, which they lived and died by.

I am sure, it is no transgression of his charge, (for it must be what he chiefly intended in the choice of this text,) to observe the testimony which, I think, he bore to some of the most precious and peculiar principles of our holy religion, in making these words his own; for this will be for your edifying, if it be not your own fault.

Christ and heaven are the peculiarities of the gospel; there, and there only, do we find the doctrine of a Mediator between God and man, and of eternal life; it is by that light only, that these great things are discovered, which were hid from ages and generations; it is on the truth of that word, that our belief of these does entirely depend. Much of God, and his glorious attributes and perfections, may be learned by the light of nature; and many excellent truths concerning him may easily be spelled out of the book of the creatures; many who learnt no higher than that book, said great things concerning the Creator. Much, likewise, of the present pleasure and advantages of virtue, may be learned from the dictates of natural conscience, and the universal experience of mankind: but it is only by the glorious gospel of the blessed God, that crown and centre of all divine revelation, that life and immortality are brought to light; by it only we come to be acquainted with Christ and heaven, heaven as our end, and Christ as our way. The knowledge of these is that true wisdom, of which the *depth saith, It is not in me; the sea saith, It is not in me;* and *which the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal.* These are the things of the Spirit of God which the mere animal man receiveth not. It is only by the New Testament, that blessed character of divine grace, that we come to be interested in Christ, and entitled through him to eternal life, which makes the Christian merchandise better than the merchandise of silver.

These are the two things which the faith of a Christian in a special manner fastens upon, the great Saviour, and the great salvation wrought out by him; these the eye of faith looks upon; these the hand of faith lays hold on. What is the faith we live by, but the faith of the Son of God, and that faith *is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* What else is true Christianity but a believing dependence upon the mediation of Christ, with a devotedness to his conduct and government in every thing; and a believing expectation of the glory to be revealed, with a careful and diligent preparation of ourselves for that glory.

O what a holy fire of love to Christ and desire toward heaven, was kindled by this faith in the breast of this good man; how did he himself feel it glow; how did those who conversed with him see it flame; how did he breathe Christ, and breathe toward heaven, even to the last breath. Let us submit to the power of the same faith, and we shall experience the fruits of it. There was another Scripture which his heart was much upon, when he saw the day approaching; and that included Christ and heaven too, it was that close of the apostle's triumph over death and the grave, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory* (that is, brings us to heaven, for till we come thither, we have not quite overcome) *through our Lord Jesus Christ:* but in this he chose to express to you the faith in which he died, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

Give me leave to improve the dying testimony of this great scholar and Christian, for the honour of pure Christianity, and the first principles of it. In many causes one aged witness is worth twenty young ones. We have here an aged witness to produce on religion's side, who has affirmed it upon his death, *that the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life is* what may be looked for with the greatest assurance and desire by all the faithful servants of Jesus Christ. *Ask thy father then, and he will show thee, thine elders, and they will tell thee,* that they have found, and so wilt thou, no righteousness and strength to be depended upon but in Christ; no happiness and life, but in heaven. Those who plead religion's cause have antiquity on their side, and the wisdom and experience of the ancients, and may boast as Eliphaz does, *With us are the grey-headed, and very aged men.* The longer men live in the world, the more experience they have of its vanity, and insufficiency to make them happy, and that drives them to set their hearts more on heaven; and the more experience they have of their own weakness and inability to help themselves, and that drives them to rest more upon Jesus Christ, and his mercy and grace. Let this recommend religion to us, that those speak well of it who have had a long acquaintance with it. Polycarp, that blessed martyr, who in the first ages of the church sealed the truth with his blood at Smyrna, being vehemently urged by the proconsul to renounce his religion, and as an evidence of it to speak ill of Christ, replied to this purpose: "Fourscore and six years I have served Christ, and have always found him a good Master, how then can I speak ill of him now?" Here was one who somewhat longer, even to his 89th year, had been drawing in Christ's yoke, and witnessed from his own experience that it was an easy yoke; and that in the service of Christ he was borne up and comforted, living and dying with the expectation of his mercy, even to eternal life.

There are six great truths contained in this text, at least by implication, which he did in effect bear his testimony to in the choice of it, and they are not

matters of nice and curious speculation, which exercise the wits of the learned, nor matters of doubtful disputation, or strifes of words, which too often engage the passions of the litigious; no, he was none of those who troubled the minds of the disciples with such things, but was himself filled, and desired to fill others, with the great things of God, the weighty matters of the law and gospel, which are all our salvation, and therefore should be all our desire; nor did he spend his zeal upon any thing but what all good Christians are agreed in, whatever different sentiments they may have, and govern themselves by, in lesser things. *Call therefore, if there be any that will answer you, and to which of the saints will you turn?* Turn to which you will, of whatever denomination, (for, far be it, far be it from us to think, that those of our own are the only ones,) and you will find they all agree in these principles of the oracles of God, which I gather from this text, which he who is gone bore his dying testimony to, and which, if we that survive were but more governed by, we should be every way better both in heart and life, and more loving and charitable to those we differ from in lesser matters, since the things wherein we differ are so few and small in comparison with the many and great things wherein we are agreed.

1. That there is another life after this. This is plainly implied in the mention which the text makes of eternal life. For we are sure that this present life is not eternal; it is short, and transient, and hastening away; and they who say, they look for eternal life, declare plainly that they believe there is another country to which they must remove, and in which they must reside, besides this through which they are now passing. And I the rather lay this down first, because our deceased father particularly appointed, that the motto engraven in the rings to be given at his funeral, should be this, "There is a life after this." God by his Spirit engrave it in all our hearts. With this word he comforted himself while he lived, and designed to instruct and admonish us, who for a little while are left behind. The plainest truths are the most precious, and carrying with them the most convincing evidence, should be the most powerful, and have the most commanding influence upon us; such a one as this, worthy indeed to be written in gold, and to be to us as the signet on our right hand, ever with us, and continually before us.

And do we indeed believe, that there is a future state, a life after this? that besides this world of sense we are conversant with, there is a world of spirits we are allied to, and must have our everlasting abode in? that when we have passed through this world of work and probation, we must certainly go to another world of recompence and retribution, and must receive *according to the things done in the body?* We say, we believe the life of the world to come; but we think of it so seldom, so slightly, though sure, though near, though just at the door, we consider it so little, and are so little influenced by it in the management of ourselves, that it may well be asked, do we indeed believe it? *Show me thy faith by thy works.*

Do we believe there is another world, that we must all be shortly lodged in for eternity? What! and yet so fond of this world, as if we were to be here always? and so mindless of that, as if we had nothing to do in preparation for it? What! and yet do so much every day to unfit us for that life, and so little to acquaint ourselves with the employments and enjoyments of it? What! and yet think so little of death, which will very certainly, and may very suddenly, remove us to that world? O that we were all more confirmed in our belief of another world! and were so wise as to consider our *latter end;* or, as it may be read, our *future state.* Then should we pass more safely and comfortably through this world, and at length out of it.

It is sad to see many, even when they are under the sensible symptoms of their approaching change, and already taken in the custody of death's messengers, still full of this life, solicitous about it, in love with it, and very loth to think of parting with it, or to hear talk of another. Our deceased father has set us a better example, and by his weanedness from this life, showed how much his eye and heart were upon another. Often has he charged his friends, those at a distance by letter, and those about him by word of mouth, not to pray for the continuance of his life; though it was as far as any man's of his age, from being made either uneasy to himself or unprofitable to others: by which it appears he was *satur dierum—full of days;* according to that promise made to them, who set their love on God, with long life was he satisfied. And what was the language of Job's corruptions concerning his present state, was the language of his graces; *I loathe it, I would not live always* in this world, *having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

2. That in the other life, there is a state of perfect and perpetual bliss, prepared for and secured to all good Christians, who live and die in the fear of God, and in the faith of Christ. The eternal life the text speaks of, is not only an immortal being; the damned in hell shall have that for the perpetuating of their misery, their worm dies not, therefore they die not; but an immortal blessedness, adequate to the enlarged capacities, and commensurate to the never-failing duration, of that immortal being.

We may firmly believe, upon the credit of eternal truth, which all the saints in all ages have set their seals to, and ventured their souls upon, that all those who, *by a patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality,* shall *obtain eternal life.* There is an everlasting perfection of joy and satisfaction, which all those that are duly

prepared for it in this world, shall certainly be put in the possession of in the other world; consisting in the immediate vision, and complete fruition, of God, as their God; a crown of immortal glory that will never wither; a kingdom that cannot be moved; an inheritance such as never was on earth, no, not in Canaan, no, not in *Eden* itself; *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, reserved in heaven for all obedient believers; the prospect of which is now a sufficient balance, and the enjoyment of which will then be an abundant recompence, of all their services, sufferings, and self-denials; all their toils, all their griefs, all their losses, heaven will make amends for all.

And do we indeed believe this? Why then are we so careless to make sure our title to this happiness? Why do we take so little pains to work out our salvation? Why do we so eagerly pursue the good things of this world, as if they were the best things, and rest in them as if they were our portion and our heritage for ever? Have we any good hope, through grace, of his happiness, why then do we go mourning from day to day under the burthen of worldly crosses, as if the glory to be revealed had not enough in it to countervail the sufferings of this present time? Let the experiences of the saints, who have not only been kept from fainting, by believing that they shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, but in the prospect of it, have been enabled to rejoice in tribulation, direct and encourage us to build our hope on the same foundation, and draw our joy from the same fountain.

3. That our present state is a state of expectation; even the greatest and best saints in this world are still looking for something yet to come, which will make them greater and better. It is certainly true, we are not yet entered into rest, we are not at home. How well soever it is with us in this world, and how easy soever, and well pleased, we are in our present state, there is still something we are to look for, and wait for; something above this world, something beyond it: the best are not so holy as they would be, nor reckon themselves to have attained, or to be already perfect; but they are still pressing forward toward the mark: the most comforted are not so happy as they would be, and expect to be, when that which is perfect is come. They who deal with God, deal upon trust, for something out of sight and in reversion, after one life; and must wait till the harvest for the return of their seed, and till the evening for the reward of their work, not of *debt* but of *free grace*.

With what a generous contempt should we look down upon the body and the world, if this truth were duly considered? What have we here, and whom have we here, that we should call this our rest? Though the human soul is conscious to itself of an innate inclination to its body, yet the sanctified soul, being touched with the loadstone of divine love, is conscious to itself of a predominant inclination to its God, and its kindred in the upper world; and therefore, even in the body, when it acts like itself, and agreeable to the principles of its new nature, it complains it is not in its centre, in its element; it is not what it would be, nor where it would be. Instead of reposing itself and being pleased, it groans, being burthened, longing to be absent from the body, as well as it loves it, that it may be present with the Lord. The delights of sense, and all the amusements and entertainments this earth can afford, are the despised crowds through which the soul, thus big with expectation, presses forward in pursuit of everlasting joys. Even holy ordinances, though a day in them is better than a thousand elsewhere on earth, yet they are but the highways through which we pass along to this eternal life, and go from strength to strength, till we appear before God in the heavenly Jerusalem: they are but means in order to a further end, in the use of which we are still looking, still waiting for the consolation of Israel.

This faithful servant of God was much in this expecting frame. That text on which he preached at my father's funeral almost twelve years ago, he seemed to have much upon his heart, and often repeated it, *We which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption.* And the last sermon he preached, the day before he sickened, and not twenty days before his death, was to the same purpose, on those words of the lamenting prophet, *It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.* I perceive by the notes of it, it was newly meditated. He intimates towards the close, that he had been upheld many years by that hoping, and quiet waiting for divine salvation, and had found peace and holy security in that way; and his notes conclude with Hab. ii. 3, 4. *The vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie; though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* Thus did he encourage his own faith and patience to hold out yet a little while; and his last breath here concurred with that of the dying patriarch, when he was blessing his sons, *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord,* Gen. xlix. 18.

4. That we have all need of divine mercy, are for ever undone without it, and must depend upon that for all the good we hope for, here or hereafter. We must never expect life, much less eternal life, but through mercy, infinite mercy. We all lie at God's mercy; he has all the advantages both of law and strength against us; our destruction would be no wrong or injustice to us, no difficulty or loss to him. We are sinners, miserable sinners; are charged with guilt, and cannot deny the charge, cannot confess and

ustify, cannot give security to answer the law; nor ıave we any arts to evade either its cognizance or ts sentence; we have no plea to put in that will ıtand us in any stead. Though we thought ourselves ighteous, yet durst we not answer; for God knows hat ill by us which we know not by ourselves, and herefore we must make supplication to our Judge,[a] ınd cast ourselves entirely upon his mercy; which ve need not be afraid to do, for he has proclaimed ıis name *Gracious and Merciful*, and is particularly ɔleased with those who hope in his mercy,[b] and in ɔbedience to his will humbly refer themselves to it.

All our comfort and happiness we must look for from the mercy of God, that mercy which is so often said to endure for ever, because the fruits of it are everlasting. The chosen vessels are said to be *vessels of mercy*;[c] and the people who are taken into covenant with God, are said to *obtain mercy*.[d] It is *according to his mercy* that he hath saved us,[e] and hath *begotten us again to a lively hope*.[f] Blessed Paul himself attributes both his fidelity and his constancy to divine mercy; *I obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful*;[g] and *as we have received mercy we faint not*.[h] Thus even the New Testament, which brings in the everlasting righteousness, yet teaches us still to have an eye to everlasting *mercy*, for pardon and peace, for grace and glory. The poor publican's prayer, *God be merciful to me a sinner*,[i] is what the best saints have set their heartiest Amen to, and have blessed God, that we find it upon record in the gospels as an answered prayer; and that he who prayed it with a humble, broken, penitent, and obedient heart, *went to his house justified*.

Thus this good man finished his course, under a deep sense of his need of the mercy of God. I shall not forget with what solemnity he said to me, when I was with him a few days before he died, and he was so weak, that he could say but little; "Here I lie, endeavouring to renew my repentance for all my sins, from my beginning to this day, and I would not think, that my weakness and illness should excuse me from the exercise of repentance." And when I was praying by him, that God would support and strengthen him, he softly put me in mind to pray, that his sins might be forgiven him. It is related both of St. Austin and of Archbishop Usher, those two great men in their day, that on their death-beds they lamented their sins of omission. Those who thus humble themselves shall be exalted.

5. That it is only from Christ, and through Christ, and in Christ, that we poor sinners can hope to find mercy. The mercy we must be saved by, if we be saved, is the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is that we must have an eye to, it is that we must depend upon for eternal life: mercy put into the hand of a Mediator, procured by him for us, conferred by him upon us; he received the gifts of mercy for men, he gave the gifts of mercy to men,[k] even the rebellious. The Father has set him at his right hand; for by him he reaches forth his mercy to the children of men, and he is so entirely intrusted with the disposal, that it is called his mercy.

The mercy of Christ appears very illustrious in his whole undertaking, from first to last; it was in his love, and in his pity, that he redeemed us, that he took this ruin under his hand. He assumed our nature, that he might be touched with a compassionate feeling of our infirmities. All his miracles were acts of mercy as well as acts of power, and instances of his kindness and good-will toward men. All the invitations he gave to poor sinners to come to him, and the promises he has made for their encouragement, are the breathings of his mercy. In all his offices his mercy shines. Is he a prophet? He can have compassion on the ignorant;[l] and they who learn of him, will find him meek and lowly. Is he a priest? He is a merciful as well as faithful High Priest.[m] Is he a king? He comes to us meek, and having salvation.[n] It is the mercy of the Redeemer that runs through the whole work of redemption, and is the support and joy of the redeemed. The apostle speaks of the meekness and gentleness of Christ,[o] as one of the most precious and powerful considerations with all good Christians, by which they ought to be influenced as much as by any thing.

The great design of the gospel is to exalt Christ, by showing, that all the favours we are now to expect from God pass through his hands, and we are beholden to him for them. It is through his blood that we receive forgiveness of sins; he is our peace, and from his fulness we receive grace for grace. The Father has committed not only *all judgment*, but *all mercy*, to the Son, that all men might honour the Son, by applying themselves to him, and resting on him; to whom the Father has given power over all flesh, on purpose that he might give eternal life, and all the preparatives for it, and earnests of it, to as many as were given him. Would we receive mercy, we must go to Christ for it; for he is *all in all*. All our springs are in him, and we must acknowledge our obligations, not only to his merit, but to his mercy, and that great love wherewith he loved us; for it is owing to his rich mercy that we have interest in his merit, and benefit by it; and this we ought to be made more and more sensible of, that we may find ourselves for ever engaged to love him, and live to him, and to cast all our crowns at his feet. Thus is boasting effectually excluded, and all flesh forbidden to glory in his presence. *It is of the Lord's mercies*, the Lord Christ's mercies, *that we are not consumed*, that we are not fire brands in hell; and it is *because his compassions fail not*, and are

[a] Job ix. 15. [b] Ps. iii. 18. [c] Rom. ix. 23. [d] 1 Pet. ii. 10. [e] Tit. iii. 5. [f] 1 Pet. i. 3. [g] 1 Cor. vii. 25. [h] 2 Cor. iv. 1. [i] Luke xviii. 13. [k] Ps. lxviii. 18. [l] Heb. v. 2. [m] Heb. ii. 17. [n] Zech. ix. 9. [o] 2 Cor. x. 1.

*new every morning*, that we continue hitherto, that we are supported under our burthens, comforted in our sorrows, have our daily infirmities pardoned, and the willingness of the spirit accepted, notwithstanding the weakness of the flesh: and if ever we get to heaven, that must be called the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, which will eternally remind the glorified saints how miserable they had been if Christ had not stood their friend. The best man in the world, when he comes to have his everlasting state determined, will certainly be undone if Christ be not merciful to him. And therefore St. Paul prays for Onesiphorus, who by his charity had lent to the Lord, not that he might have justice done him, but that he might find mercy of the Lord in that day.[p] If the merciful be blessed, it is not because they are men of merit, but because they obtain mercy[q] with the Lord Jesus. *Son of David, have mercy on us; Jesus, Master, have mercy on us;* must be the breathings of our souls, even to the last; living, dying, and in the judgment.

This was it that our deceased father was full of. To him to live was Christ; the mercy of Christ, and the merit of Christ. It was but a few weeks before he died, that he gave this thesis to a candidate for the ministry, to be maintained at his trial for his ordination, *Justitia qua coram Deo sistimus est justitia Christi Mediatoris—That we cannot appear before God in any righteousness of our own, but Christ's merit is our only righteousness*, and for that we are ever indebted to his mercy. "None but Christ, none but Christ."

6. That the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ is as necessary to the finishing of the work of our salvation, as it was to the beginning of it. We not only receive the mercy of Christ in our justification, sanctification, and present comforts, but we look for it still, even unto eternal life; we depend upon that to bring us to heaven, to preserve us to that kingdom, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Christ's mercy may be looked for even to eternal life; for whom he loves, he loves to the end, loves them into heaven, that world of everlasting love; for his gifts and callings are without repentance. The vessels of mercy shall be vessels of honour; and though they commit iniquity, they shall be brought to repentance, so that mercy shall not depart from them. Grace in the soul is the work of God's own hands, which he will not forsake, because his mercy endures for ever, and he will perfect that which concerns us. As for God his work is perfect; it began in mere mercy, rescuing a malefactor from death; but that mercy will proceed till it crowns a friend and favourite with endless glory. *This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*

Let this mercy, therefore, be depended upon to the last, and let us have our eye ever towards it; let not the strongest and most experienced Christians think their own hands sufficient for them, or imagine that if Christ's mercy will but help them *so far*, they can then shift for themselves; no, if that mercy be not drawn out to eternal life, we are undone. If the same who is the author be not the finisher of our faith and hope, they will never be perfected in vision and fruition. If goodness and mercy do not follow us *all* our days, even to the last, we shall never reach to dwell in the house of the Lord. To it, therefore, let us commit the great trust against that day, and depend upon the same kind and mighty hand that laid the foundation of this great work, and fastened the corner-stone of it, at length to bring forth the top-stone with shoutings, and eternity itself will be short enough to be spent in crying, *Grace, grace* to it.

And thus I have briefly touched upon those great truths, to which it should seem this faithful witness designed to bear his dying testimony in choosing this text; and we know that his witness is true, and I hope we believe, not for his saying only, but that we have heard them ourselves, tasted the sweetness, and felt the power of them in our own hearts; which is the most convincing evidence to us of the truth of them.

But if indeed we receive these truths in the light and love of them,

(1.) Let us bless God that they are so clearly revealed to us in the Scripture. Blessed are our eyes, for they see the joyful light, our ears, for they hear the joyful sound, of Christ and heaven; things not only hid from the wise and prudent, who despised them, but from prophets and kings, that *desired* to see them, and might not. Bless God that we see eternal life set before us, and not set out of our reach, while we see Christ undertaking for us, able to save to the uttermost, and as willing as he is able.

Let us, therefore, give diligence to get the knowledge of these great things, and grow in our acquaintance with them; let us more firmly believe the gospel doctrines concerning Christ and heaven, for they are faithful sayings, and more familiarly converse with them, for they are worthy of all acceptation. Let men of learning learn Christ; let men of business understand this business; for without this, the most learned men at their end will be fools, and the richest men at their end will be beggars—beggars in vain. The gospel of Christ is the same to the wise and the unwise, to the Greek and the barbarian. The greatest wits and statesmen are not above the knowledge of Christ and heaven, and that knowledge is not above the capacity of the meanest who seek it faithfully. Set your hearts therefore unto all the words which *are* testified among you this day, Deut. xxxii. 46. for believe it, they are matters of life and death.

[p] 2 Tim. i. 18.

[q] Matt. v. 7.

(2.) Let us bless God that they are so well attested by the experiences of wise and good men. Though our faith stands not upon any human testimony, yet it is an encouragement to us to venture our souls upon the same foundation that so many have, to their unspeakable satisfaction, ventured theirs.—Some who have traversed the vast region of human learning, have owned with Solomon, that the increase of it has been but the increase of sorrow, and they have found no true joy but in the doctrine of Christ. Mr. Selden was confessedly one of the greatest scholars of his age, and on his death-bed expressed himself to this purpose to archbishop Usher—That he had in his time taken a great deal of pains in searching after knowledge, had surveyed most parts of the learning of the sons of men; but in all the books and manuscripts he was master of, he found nothing wherein he could rest his soul, save the Holy Scripture, and that passage was especially comfortable to him, *The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope*, Tit. ii. 11—13. We have now parted with one who was as well acquainted with books and men, and had improved as much by that acquaintance, as perhaps any man I ever knew; yet he counts all but loss, that he may know Christ, and win Christ, and be found in him; and that which you see gave him the greatest satisfaction in his dying moments, was an expectation of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Look upon it as the testimony of a minister, who has often in Christ's name called upon you to lay hold on eternal life, and to make that sure. Now you see he urged you to nothing else but what he did himself; he directed you to Christ and his mercy, and there he reposed himself. Therefore the ministry is committed to men like ourselves, because they having souls to save as well as we, we may hope they will deal for our souls as for their own, and direct us to build upon no other foundation than what they themselves build upon, and will speak what they themselves have seen, and testify what they have themselves known. Your ministers who are gone, embarked for another world in the same vessel which they have often persuaded you to embark in, and have thereby showed they were in earnest with you.

But if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; men may be deceived, but God cannot: by faith receive his testimony, and so set to your seal that he is true: *and this is the record*, it is the sum total which all I have said amounts to, *that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

II. I come now to consider this text as recommended to us, with design not only to express the workings of his heart towards Christ and heaven, but to impress the like workings on our hearts. And so the words come in here as an exhortation to this duty of looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. The former is in order to this. They who have themselves tasted of the mercy and grace of Christ, cannot but desire that others also may taste of it. True grace hates monopolies, and desires not to eat its morsels alone. Sinners entice you to cast in your lot among them, and tell you, you shall find all precious substance, and fill your houses with spoil; but they lay wait for their own blood, and their end will certainly be bitter as wormwood; hearken to the invitations of the sons and heirs of heaven, and be persuaded to cast in your lot among them, for *yet there is room;* in Christ and eternal life, there is enough for all, enough for each, enough for you, and you will all be welcome. Your deceased pastor was himself so fully convinced of the reality and certainty of unseen things, that he earnestly desired you also might be convinced of them, and that none of you might perish in ignorance and unbelief concerning them. He had such pleasure in looking for this eternal life, and such satisfaction in relying on Christ for it, that he wished you the same pleasure, the same satisfaction. It yielded him solid substantial comfort on his death-bed, which renewed the inward man, even then when the outward man was decaying. Then he said with thankfulness, that through the grace of God, he had abundance of peace; and that his heart was as full of joy as it could hold. Let this encourage you to follow him and others, who are now through faith and patience inheriting the promises. He had hope in his death, and you have reason to think he is now happy; be you holy, and you shall be happy too. Heaven is not intended only for good ministers, but for all good Christians who now have their conversation in heaven. The crown of righteousness shall be given, not only to such great men as St. Paul was, but to all those who love Christ's appearing; who love his first appearing, and are thankful for it; his second appearing, and long for it. Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and excluded none who do not exclude themselves; put in for it therefore, and resolve not to take up short of it. Would you die the death of the righteous? live their life. Would you have your last end like theirs? let your present way be like theirs. Follow their faith, who made Christ the end of their conversation, who, what he was to them yesterday, will be the same to us to-day, and to them and us for ever. Whatever you heard or saw in your aged minister that was instructive and exemplary, transcribe it into your own hearts and lives, and thus let him still live among you; and then death, which has parted him from you a while, to make you amends, will shortly fetch you to him.

When he ordered that this text should be preached upon at his funeral, he withal gave direction, that I should take some notice of the foregoing words, and observe something from them for your instruction. And, I think, this will be the most proper place to do it, in order to your attaining a well-grounded hope of eternal life. The context is this, (*v.* 20, 21.) *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God;* and then *continue looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.* From all which I shall now in the close, give you some directions, and I beseech you, suffer the word of exhortation, and submit to it. Now though Providence has prepared the ground, (and those hearts are hard indeed, that will not be softened by the death of two such ministers so near together,) I would hope, the seed of the word might take root, and bring forth fruit.

1. Lay a good foundation in holy faith, and the love of God. This is supposed in those exhortations to *build up ourselves on our most holy faith*, and to *keep ourselves in the love of God.* See that you be well principled, that the root of the matter be found in you, else you cannot be fruitful in the fruits of righteousness. Let our holy faith in Christ lead us to the love of God, as reconciled to us through him.

Firmly believe the doctrine of Christ, embrace it, rely upon it, be delivered into it as into a mould, receive the impressions of it, and submit to the commanding constraining power of it. Let your faith particularly receive Christ, and rest upon him, as your Prophet, Priest, and King, and resign yourselves to him to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him. Let it be a faith unfeigned, and not a bare profession, a faith that purifies the heart, then it is a holy faith. The doctrine we believe is holy, let us be sanctified by it. It is faith that overcomes the world, quenches the fiery darts of Satan, realizes unseen things, establishes the heart, and keeps us from fainting; neither circumcision avails any thing, nor uncircumcision, but this holy faith is all in all. We have no benefit by divine revelation, that great blessing of the world, without faith, no more than we have by the light of the sun without eyes. The word preached will not profit, if it be not mixed with faith.

Let this faith work by love, such a reigning love of God in your hearts, as will eat out all sinful self-love, and the love of the world, and will kindle in you a holy fire of devotion to God, and zeal for his honour in every thing; such a love as will make the keeping of all his commandments easy to you, and particularly that of brotherly love; get this love shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost, and do all you do in religion from that principle.

2. Build upon this foundation, else in vain was the foundation laid. Ye beloved, who have escaped the snares of the scorners, he is speaking of in the verses before, and are contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, Jude 3. think it not enough that you have and hold the true religion, but be still building up yourselves on your most holy faith.

Proceed upon the good principles that through grace are laid, and act in conformity to them, as those who in all you say and do are governed by conscience, and the fear and love of God. Proceed in the good practices you have begun, and never grow weary of well doing. You have still need of helps for your souls, bless God there are such to be had, who will build, and will help you to build up yourselves, upon the good foundations of faith and love, which your ministers who are gone have laid among you.

Go forth, therefore, and go on in the strength of Christ, in the work and warfare of your Christianity. Be daily improving in knowledge, in wisdom, in every grace, and reckon not yourselves to have apprehended. You have daily lessons to learn, be getting forward in your learning; daily work to do, be still doing it, and rid ground in your journey heaven-wards. Have you begun well? Let nothing hinder you. Have you gone on well hitherto? Lose not the things which you have wrought, the things which you have gained. We are clogged with so many corruptions, and surrounded with so many temptations, that if we do not get ground, we certainly lose ground; like a boat on the river, if it be not rowed up the stream, it will of itself go down the stream. *Non progredi est regredi,—Not to advance is to retreat.* Aim high therefore, and press forward, having such a prize set before you. Run with patience the race set before you. Hold fast Christ as the foundation, which will stand the storm, and then carry your building as high as heaven above the storm. Let your motto be *Plus ultra—Onward.*

3. Be constant and inward with God in prayer. Would you build yourselves on your most holy faith, pray much, and pray in the Holy Ghost, for except the Lord build the spiritual house, they labour in vain who build it. We can do nothing for ourselves of ourselves, but all our sufficiency is of God; to him therefore we must continually apply ourselves; he has promised grace to help in every time of need, but he will for this be inquired of by the house of Israel. Ask, and it shall be given you, not otherwise: ask in faith, ask in earnest, ask and seek by endeavour, ask and knock with constancy and importunity, as become Jacob's seed, and Jacob's God will not let it be in vain. By prayer give glory to God, and then you may expect to receive grace from him, and would be every way better did you pray more, and more to the purpose. Let all your comforts draw you, and all your crosses drive you, to your knees, and especially let your deficiencies in faith engage you to pray for the increase of it, and the fulfilling of the work of faith with power

You would profit more by the word of faith, if you did pray more for a blessing upon it. You will not sit down to meat, why then will you sit down to a sermon, the food of your souls, without craving a blessing. Praying contributes no less to our edification in faith than hearing does, indeed it does more, for it engages God on our side.

And whenever you pray, see that it be in the Holy Ghost; pray under the Spirit's influence and operation, who makes intercession in us, and helps our praying infirmities. Let your spirits be employed in the duty, and in order thereunto see it necessary to depend upon God's Spirit. It is not his inspiration, as a Spirit of prophecy, that we are to expect, but his conduct and strength, his light and heat, as a Spirit of adoption, a Spirit of grace and supplication.

4. Take heed of every thing that tends to quench the fire of holy love, and would cast you out of God's favour. This is intended in that branch of exhortation, *Keep yourselves in the love of God.* We must not only pray, but watch, and make it our constant care and endeavour to preserve both the good work of God in us, and the good will of God toward us.

Let us keep ourselves in love to God, as the most beautiful Being, and the most bountiful Benefactor. Take heed of every thing that would hinder the operations of his love. Let not the pleasures of a prosperous condition draw off your love from God, nor divert it to lying vanities; nor let the sorrows of an afflicted condition cool your love towards God, nor occasion you to entertain any hard thoughts of him. The love of God is that fire on the altar, with which all our sacrifices must be kindled; let it not go out for want of being blown, and stirred up, by pious and devout meditations on the grace of God, which are the fuel of pious and devout affections.

Let us keep our interest in the love of God, and beware of saying or doing any thing to forfeit it. Has God graciously condescended to take you into covenant and communion with himself, be sure you keep his commandments, that you may abide in his love; and may not lose or lessen your interest in him. Carefully avoid sin, all appearances of it, and approaches to it, for fear of offending God, and incurring his displeasure. You are upon your good behaviour, see that you behave yourselves well, that no man take your crown. If you throw yourselves out of God's love, to whom will you betake yourselves? You have lost your best friend, have made him your enemy, and who then can befriend you? Be solicitous therefore to please God, and let it be the top of your ambition to be accepted of him. Keep in the way of your duty; keep close to holy ordinances, and live in brotherly love, then you keep yourselves in the love of God.

Keep ἑαυτους—*one another* in the love of God; so it may be read; watch over one another; edify one another; do all you can to prevent others from falling into sin, and to recover them from it; to provoke one another to love and to good works, and not to provoke one another's passions; let hand join in hand to promote every thing that is good, that you may strengthen and encourage one another in all the instances of holy love, and so may keep one another in the love of God. It was Cain who said, *Am I my brother's keeper.*

5. Lay hold on eternal life; it is set before you not only as the visible heavens, to be looked upon, but as a prize, to be run for, and fought for: it is offered to you; it may be yours upon very easy terms, it will be yours unless you put it away from you. Many a time you have had the offers of it made you, and now once more: give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye-lids, till you have, through grace, made sure your title to it. Believe the reality of it; prefer it before all the delights of sense and time; consent to the conditions upon which it is offered; be willing to part with all for it; set your hearts upon it, and keep it always in your eye.

It is life, my brethren, it is the life of your souls, it is eternal life, that you are urged to lay hold on. A life on the other side death, but a life that has no death on the other side it. Your present lives are dying lives, and so are the lives of all your friends; the lives of your ministers, you see, are so: we cannot take any fast hold of this life, or of any of the enjoyments of it; place your happiness therefore in eternal life, seek and secure it there. Your ministers, who preached to you the words of that life, are one after another gone before you to the enjoyment of it: let their death do that which their life has not done, to draw your hearts upward, upward toward God; forward, forward toward heaven.

6. Let Jesus Christ be all in all to you. In every thing wherein you have to do with God, depend upon the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ; and in all things let him have the pre-eminence with you. Remember, you are Christians; but in vain are you called so, if you rest in mere natural religion, and relish not the truth, as it is in Jesus. If Christ be of no account with you, Christ will be of no effect to you; and then you are undone. If you leave Christ out of your religion, who is indeed the *Alpha* and the *Omega* of it, what comfort can you find in it? what benefit can you expect from it here or hereafter? If you look for that in yourselves, that righteousness, and that strength, which is to be had in Christ only, you must thank yourselves when the disappointment proves fatal. He who is sinking, if he embrace himself, perishes, but if he lays hold on the hand reached out to him, he may be helped. You are disciples of Christ, devoted to Christ, dependents on Christ; as, therefore, you have received him, so walk in him:

you have need of him daily, make daily use of him. He is the true Christian, in whom Christ is formed, and he the growing Christian, who grows up into Christ in all things.

Your ministers were of St. Paul's spirit, to them to live was Christ, to preach Christ; nor did they desire to know any thing among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Let the same mind, therefore, be in you, and whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Live upon the mercy of Christ, see yourselves lost without it, and cast yourselves upon it: let that be your stay, and stay yourselves upon it; let that be your comfort, and comfort yourselves with it. Be ready to own your dependence on Christ, and your obligations to him; Christ is a Christian's all, and therefore, blessed be God for Jesus Christ. Let that be the burthen of every song.

Lastly, Live in the believing hopes and expectations of eternal life through the mercy of Christ. If, by the grace of God, you have taken some care, some pains, to make it sure, (I hope I speak to many who have done it,) take the comfort of it. Be still looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life, and with patience wait for it. Let actual thoughts and expectations of eternal life be the daily entertainment of your souls. Look upon it as real, as near, as yours; and please yourselves with the prospect of it. How often do our foolish, idle fancies build us castles in the air, and please us with the imagination of things uncertain, unlikely, impossible! When at the same time, if we would set our faith on work, that would entertain us with the delightful contemplation of real bliss, which we shall very shortly be in the possession of; and which will so far exceed our present conceptions of it, that we need not fear, lest (as it is with the things of this world) the raised expectation of them should be a drawback upon the enjoyment of them, and lessen the pleasure of it. But on the contrary, the more we converse with it in faith and hope, the better prepared we shall be for it, and the more will the capacities of the sanctified soul be enlarged to take in those joys. What! sirs, do we hope to be in heaven quickly, to be there eternally, and yet think so seldom of it, and please ourselves so little with the foresight of its glories, and the foretaste of its pleasures. Let us raise our expectations, for the things are neither doubtful, nor distant, nor despicable, but sure, and great, and very near; and the hope of them, if built on Christ, will not make us ashamed.

Let our hopes and expectations of eternal life wean us from this world, and take our affections off from it. What an inconsiderable point is this earth, to one who has his conversation in heaven! How trifling are the things that are seen, that are temporal and transitory, to one who keeps his eye and heart on the things that are not seen, that are eternal. Let this hope purify us from all the pollutions of sin, and pacify all the tumults of our spirits, that we may be found of Christ in peace. Let it engage and quicken us to the utmost diligence in the service of God: it is sure worth while, to take pains in that work, which no less than eternal life will be the recompence of. Do we hope for the mercy of Christ? Let us then put on, as the elect of God, bowels of compassion, and upon all occasions show mercy, as those who hope to find mercy. And since temporal death must be our passage to this eternal life, let our expectations of it not only take off the terror of death, but make it welcome to us. Why should we make any difficulty of putting off the earthly house of this tabernacle, in order to our removal to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens? Rather let us hasten to meet with cheerfulness that messenger which will fetch us to life, though it come under the name of death; and all the days of our appointed time continue waiting till it come; with reference to the burthens and troubles of this life, waiting with a holy patience; and yet, with reference to the joy set before us, (if I may so speak,) with a holy impatience: *Why are his chariot-wheels so long a coming!* Let us have our eye to this eternal life when we pray daily, *Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name: thy kingdom come.*

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# A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF THE

# LIFE OF THE REV. MR. FRANCIS TALLENTS.

If my information be right, his grandfather was a Frenchman, and was brought over into England by Sir Francis Leak, (whose descendants were Lords Deincourt, afterwards Earls of Scarsdale) who did honourably for him, because in France, upon some occasion or other, he had been instrumental to save his life.

Our Mr. Tallents was born in Nov. 1619, at a little

town called Pelsley, not far off Chesterfield, in Derbyshire.

There is this remarkable concerning his family; that his parents, who were religious good people, both died when their children were very young; he, who was the eldest of six, was then but fourteen years of age; but of all those six children, not one died for above seventy years after: but (be it observed to the glory of God, as the orphans' God, whose providence takes up, when father and mother forsake) they all lived in reputation and comfort, were eminently religious, and considering what was left among them, wonderfully prospered in the world.

His father's eldest brother, whose name he bore, was a clergyman, and was a wise and tender father to these orphans; he was, first, chaplain to my Lord Deincourt, and tutor to his sons, and was afterwards presented by him to a good living: this nephew of his, and another, he bred scholars. The other was Mr. Philip Tallents, a very worthy conformist in Lincolnshire, who died not long since, and an entire and close affection there was between the two brothers, notwithstanding the difference of their sentiments in some things.

His uncle sent him first to the free-school at Mansfield, afterwards to that of Newark, where he made such great progress in learning, that one of his masters sent his uncle word, "He was not a silver but a golden talent."

He spoke sometimes of a sermon he heard, when he was very young, on these words, (Ps. cxix. 113.) *I hate vain thoughts;* which much affected him, and gave him occasion to ask a good grandmother he had, "Whether the devil could know our thoughts?" And he was much satisfied when she told him, "*No, God only knoweth our thoughts.*"

When he was about sixteen years of age, he was sent to Cambridge by his uncle, and was entered first in Peter-House; but after some time he was removed thence, whilst he was under-graduate, to Magdalen College, to be sub-tutor to two or three sons of the Earl of Suffolk, who we think were successively Earls of Suffolk, and the third, the present Earl.

Soon after he came to Magdalen College, it pleased God to call him by his grace, and to reveal his Son in him. I find not any account of the work of God upon his heart, under his own hand, which were to be wished, nor can I recollect the steps of it, as he has sometimes related them to me. He sometimes said pleasantly to his friends, "When I began to be serious, I soon became a notorious puritan; for which I bless God's holy name."

I have heard him speak of the strong temptations to infidelity with which he was assaulted, and which for some time he grappled with; but by divine grace he got over them. It was an easy thing, he would say, to believe the being of God, and his providence, and the principles of natural religion; but to believe that Jesus Christ, who was crucified at Jerusalem, is the Son of God, and my Redeemer and Saviour, and to rest upon him alone for righteousness and life, this is a hard thing. But this was it which he was all his days abundantly filled with, and more and more confirmed in, that *Christ is all in all.* There was nothing which he more frequently, nor more earnestly, pressed in all his preaching, than this, as having himself experienced not only the comfort of it, but the power and efficacy of it to promote sanctification and a holy life. Christ is the life of our souls, and the foundation of all true religion: and yet if we look into the world, and much more into our own hearts, we shall find that we are least acquainted with him, and are easily drawn from him. We are apt to rest upon our own works, to trust in our own strength and righteousness. Nature in some sort teaches us to do many good things; and when we do amiss, to be sorry for it; and to ask pardon of God, because he is good and merciful; and thus we hope to be accepted of God, though we lay aside Christ, if not in words, yet in the actings of our souls and spirits: whereas we are made accepted only in the Beloved, and no pardon and salvation is to be had, but by Jesus Christ the Son of God. To cleave to Christ alone, and live by him, is both honourable, and pleasing to God, and makes us have high thoughts of forgiveness of sins, and acceptance with God; and without this, we are even fit to turn Quakers. He called it a golden saying of St. Austin, *In causâ duorum hominum per quorum unum sub peccato venditi sumus, per alterum liberamur, tota consistit Christiana religio,—The transaction of two men is the sum of the Christian religion, by one of whom we are sold under sin, by the other we are redeemed.* And quoted Damasus's creed for it, *In hujus morte et sanguine credimus emundatos nos, &c.—In whose death and blood we believe that we are cleansed.*

But to return. About the year 1642, he went to travel in France, and other foreign parts, as tutor to the Earl of Suffolk's sons, and I think was abroad with them above two years; and there he improved himself very much with the conversation of the learned men he met with, and was always very communicative of the observations he made. I have often heard him say, that what he saw abroad with his own eyes of the popish religion, and what conferences he had with its advocates, added much to his conviction of the falsehood and wickedness of it, and confirmed him in the protestant religion.

Upon his return from his travels, he was made Fellow of Magdalen College, by the interest of the Earl of Suffolk. Dr. Fuller, in his History of the University of Cambridge, says, That the mastership of that College is neither in the gift of the crown, nor the choice of the College, but at the disposal of the Earls of Suffolk, hereditary patrons of that foun-

dation. He afterwards became Senior Fellow, and President, or Vice-Master of the College. Having entered upon his Fellowship, he became an eminent tutor in the College; among many others, very many, Sir Robert Sawyer, afterwards Attorney-General, was his pupil, and Dr. Burton.

In the latter end of the year 1645, he began to preach in Cambridge. His first sermon (as I take it) was on Rom. viii. 31. *What shall we then say to these things?* in which he endeavoured to encourage others with the doctrine of Christ's mediation, which had been so great a support and comfort to him; over that sermon, as one who aimed to be an experimental preacher, he wrote those words of the Psalmist, when he had obtained the joy of God's salvation, *Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* He preached often in the College Chapel, and at St. Mary's.

He was solemnly ordained to the ministry at London, Nov. 29, 1648, in the parish church of St. Mary Wolnoth, by the third classical presbytery in the province of London, being called (so the letters of his ordination run) to the work of the ministry in the University of Cambridge, as Fellow of Magdalen College there; he is therefore solemnly set apart to the office of a preaching presbyter, and work of the ministry, with fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands.

The University of Cambridge being authorized by Queen Elizabeth to choose every year twelve Doctors or Graduates, who should have power to preach in all parts of England or Ireland, without licence from the Ordinaries, Mr. Tallents was chosen one of them, and was so empowered by an instrument under the University seal, bearing date Oct. 6, 1649.

In the year 1652, he left the University, and came to Shrewsbury to be minister of St. Mary's church. Being to come into the country, he refused to take his degree of Bachelor of Divinity, (though I think he performed his exercises for it,) because that might have been an occasion of his being forced to take place of many in the country, who were his seniors in the ministry.

Now he applied himself entirely to the work of the ministry, and laid out himself to do good to the souls of those who were committed to his charge. And though he had been near twenty years an academic, and intimately conversant with all sorts of learning, yet he preached as one who would seem to know nothing, but Jesus Christ and him crucified, studiously accommodating himself to the capacities of his hearers, and delivering to them the great things of God, not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit.

He was much honoured and respected by all the ministers of those parts, and his judgment and advice sought and valued by many. The character Mr. Baxter gives of him in his memoirs is, "That he was a good scholar, a godly blameless divine, and that he was most eminent for extraordinary prudence, and moderation and peaceableness toward all;" and we know that this record is true; and that he was that just and righteous man whom Solomon describes, (Prov. x. 31, 32.) *Whose mouth bringeth forth wisdom*, and whose *lips know what is acceptable*,—what is apposite.

Soon after he came to Shrewsbury, he married the daughter of ——— Clive of Walford, Esq. by whom he had one son, bred a scholar at Cambridge, but did not prove a comfort to him. Grace does not always run in the blood. Here there was no reason to fear it did not: but his days were not long in the land.

In the year 1656, there was a public dispute in the parish church of Ellesmere in Shropshire, between Mr. Porter (that eminent divine) minister of Whitchurch, and one Mr. Haggar, an anabaptist, concerning infant baptism, occasioned by a sermon Mr. Porter had preached on that subject at the lecture of Ellesmere: in which dispute, Mr. Tallents was pitched upon to be moderator. An account of that dispute was then printed, in which it appears, that as Mr. Porter abundantly confirmed the doctrine he had preached to the satisfaction of all indifferent persons, and plainly made out the right which the infant seed of believers have to baptism, and so did his part as a disputant, so Mr. Tallents did his as moderator, beginning and ending with prayer, and directing the progress of the dispute (which continued five hours) with prudence and candour, that is, like himself.

In the year 1658, his dear wife died, after she had lived with him but four or five years; thus is our mountain shaken many times, when we think it stands strong, and shall not be moved. He buried her in the same grave in which he himself was buried fifty years after.

When the king was restored in the year 1660, he not only showed an entire satisfaction in that resettlement of the government, after its foundations had been long out of course, and a sincere affection to the king, as the presbyterians throughout the kingdom did, but intimated likewise his readiness to conform, as far as he could with a good conscience, to the changes that were then made in the church. He therefore read (as I think I have been told) some parts of the liturgy at that time.

But when the Act of Uniformity took place on Bartholomew day, 1662, his conscience being dissatisfied with the terms of conformity thereby insisted on, he was necessitated to quit his place, which was his livelihood, and (which was more grievous to him, and many others) his work and usefulness, which were his life. He has sometimes observed, that before the wars the puritans generally made a shift to conform and come into the church, notwithstanding the hard usage they foresaw (by the trouble frequently given to those of that character) they were

likely to meet with in it. To prevent which, for the future, two new barriers or fortifications were erected by the Act of Uniformity to keep them out; one was the declaration, "that it is unlawful upon any pretence whatsoever, to take up arms against the king:" and this fort they who erected it, about twenty-six years after, were obliged to quit, as not tenable; for when they had broken through it, by joining with those who took up arms against King James, and setting the Prince of Orange upon the throne, they silently took away that declaration, both out of the Uniformity Act, and that of corporations, by an act in the first of King William and Queen Mary; trusting to the other as sufficient to answer their intention, which was the declaration of an unfeigned assent and consent to all and every thing contained in the book entitled "The book of Common Prayer," &c. (and the Act of Uniformity itself is the first article in the contents of the book so entitled, and must therefore be unfeignedly consented to;) which declaration still remains to many tender consciences such an objection against conformity as they cannot get over.

Mr. Tallents, as long as he lived, generally observed Bartholomew day every year, as a day of humiliation and prayer, either publicly, or in private, especially toward his latter end. "A day to bring to remembrance," so he used to call it. On this occasion, he sometimes called people wisely to consider the work of God; to consider the condition of those ministers who were then silenced, how they were hated, despised, and imprisoned, and what great hardships they and their families were reduced to; how sad it was with the people, who were deprived of those helps for their souls which they had greatly valued, and been edified by, and how they sat down at first as men astonished. "Consider," (said he) "that though men were the instruments of it, it was the work of God. *Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord? It is the Lord that hath covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud.* It was our Father, it was our dear Lord and Master, who made this breach upon us. He did it righteously for our sins; the sins of us his ministers. It was not for our sins that men put us out, but it was for our sins that God put us out: who of us have not acknowledged this? It was for the sins of the good people who loved us, who did not profit as they might have done. It was for the sins of those who hated us, and were set against us, who desired to be rid of such preaching and praying, and said, *Prophesy not; therefore they shall not prophesy.* Yet we hope many of us got good by our sufferings, were purified by them, and our hearts made better by our sadness. God would show us, that he can carry on his work another way, and multiply his people, even when they are in affliction; and make even the sufferings of his ministers to turn to the furtherance of the gospel of Christ."

He sometimes observed with thankfulness the care God took of his ejected ones, how wonderfully he provided for them, so as to keep them alive; as the disciples, who were sent out without purse or scrip, and yet when they were asked, *Lacked you any thing?* answered, *Nothing, Lord!* Especially, that they obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.

One remark more I shall take notice of which he made upon the silencing of the ministers; "Lord," (said he,) "what poor weak creatures are we; when some applaud this as an excellent deed, and yet others look upon it as a great sin."

But as he was truly conscientious in his nonconformity, and entirely satisfied in the reasons of it, so he was eminently moderate in it, and let his moderation be known unto all men: he loved all good people of every denomination, and took all occasions to witness against bigotry on all sides.

For the most part, he attended the public ministry and the liturgy both morning and afternoon, and preached only in the evening, and on the week days, as he had opportunity, and fell not into any constant stated work for some years (as I think) after he was silenced, waiting to see what God would do with him.

In the year 1670, he went to travel in France a second time, as tutor to two young gentlemen, Mr. Boscawen and Mr. Hambden, with whom he spent about two years and a half in making the complete tour of that kingdom and the parts adjacent. We find among his papers a very exact journal of all his motions and observations, from the day he set out from London to the day he returned. There we find him at Diep, Roan, Caen, Alenson, Angiers, Nantes, Saumur, Tours, Orleans, Thoulouse, Monpellier, Nismes, Marseilles, Thoulon, Lyons, Geneva, Bern, Basil, Zurich, Strasburg, and at length at Paris. Of these, and abundance of other places, he gives a very particular account, describing the rarities both of nature and art; their civil government, the churches, and religious houses; and especially an account of the protestants and their churches; the learned men in every place, and his conferences with them, and the informations he received from them; in recording which, there appears a great deal of care. Had he put his last hand to this journal, and published it then, I doubt not but it would have been both an acceptable entertainment to the world, and a considerable reputation to him: but his great modesty concealed it, not only from the world, but from his intimate friends, for I know not of any to whom he communicated it; so far was he from the ostentation of a traveller, so little did he value himself upon these accomplishments, which many would have been proud of, and so much was he taken up with the better country, the heavenly. Yet when there was occasion, he failed not to inform and entertain his friends with his observations he made when he was abroad. Mr. Boscawen, one of

the gentlemen that he travelled with, died at Strasburg of the small pox, to his great grief.

While he was at Paris, where he continued some months, he wrote a pretty large treatise, giving a particular description of the Roman catholic religion, by comparing their books, which he carefully read, and their practice, which he carefully observed, with each other. He gives an account, 1. Of their doctrine and opinions, chiefly from the Council of Trent, which he gives an abstract of; also from the canon law, and the writings of their doctors. 2. Of their worship and ceremonies: which he gives an account of by their books, put out by order of their popes, &c. of which the pontifical, ritual, breviary, and missal are the chief: also by their ordinary practice in public and private; their extraordinary devotions in processions, jubilees, confrairies, &c. and by their religious orders of men and women. 3. Of the means they use to support it, to confirm their own, win upon others, and overcome those who will not be won upon by them: and lastly, of the several sorts of religions, or religious orders, among them. Of all which, he says, *Vidisse est confutâsse—The appearance itself is a sufficient confutation.* He adds some of his thoughts on that question, Whether those who are devout in the Romish religion may be saved? and concludes their case highly dangerous, because they are idolaters; but expresses himself with great tenderness and compassion, bearing them record that many of them have a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge. He shows in the close the folly and wickedness of those protestants who make light of popery, and think there is no great hurt in it.

This treatise is dedicated to the Reverend Mr. Samuel Hildersham, (son of Mr. Arthur Hildersham,) to whom he was nephew by marriage.

At his return from his travels in the year 1673, he found the dissenters in England blessed with some breathing time from the extreme persecutions with which for so many years they had been harassed, and their assemblies tolerated. This soon brought him back to Shrewsbury; for no employment, no entertainment, was in his account comparable to that of preaching the gospel, for the honour of Christ, and the salvation of precious souls; when, therefore, a door of opportunity was opened for that, among the people he had formerly stood in the relation of a pastor to, he presently embraced it, though it was no way to his secular advantage, and though it broke him off very much from his conversation with scholars and great men. Herein he was a follower of the faith of Moses, who though he was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, visited his brethren the children of Israel, and was content to take his lot with them.

Mr. John Bryan (the son of Dr. Bryan of Coventry) was turned out from St. Chad's church, Shrewsbury, and under his ministry the presbyterian dissenters there sat down; a pious man, and a good preacher. With him Mr. Tallents joined, and they divided the work between them: the congregation meeting in the house of that eminent Christian, Mrs. Hunt, relict of Col. Hunt, member of parliament. Much good was now done in that place by the ministry of these two worthy men.

Mr. Tallents had formerly, for the use of his pupils, drawn up a scheme of general chronology, which he had found of great use to them in reading history. This, having leisure for close study, now he was again settled in Shrewsbury, he set himself to enlarge, which he did to that degree of fulness and exactness, that it very well deserves the title under which it is known to the world: *A View of Universal History.* It cost him abundance of pains, more than can be imagined, to bring it to perfection, and to put it into that curious form in which it now appears: he was very exact in comparing his authors, and careful to avoid mistakes; every line there was the product of more study than perhaps some pages of another nature would be. He was very intent upon it, and applied himself to it with great industry. If any came to speak with him in his studying hours, he would desire them to despatch their business in as few words as they could, that he might return to his business, which was his great delight, next to the immediate service of God, and the work of his ministry, which he always preferred. I remember with what affection he would bless God with his family, on a Lord's-day morning, that on that day we were to lay aside our studies and our books, and give ourselves to communion with God in holy joy and praise.

Those chronological tables which give that view of universal history, were finely engraven on sixteen copper plates in his own house, and published about the year 1684, made up either in books or maps. How well they were received, and how much they are and will be valued by the learned world, I need not say. Some of his friends were very urgent with him to publish them in Latin, for the benefit of foreigners, but he said he intended them chiefly for the benefit of the nobility and gentry of our own nation, that they might have things which lay dispersed set before them in a clear and short view. It is certain there is nothing in them of partiality, or that looked designed to serve any party, but plain truth as far as it can be discovered.

I find among his papers many chronological disquisitions, and historical remarks; some seem to be drawn up in preparation for those tables, others for the illustration of them, but a vast deal of learning there is in them. That which encouraged him to take pains herein was the exceeding great use and benefit of history; that it shows us God's ways and dealings with his church and people, and the nations of

the world; it helps us to understand the prophecies of Scripture; and it raises us above that narrowness of spirit which most are subject to, and keeps us from thinking that there is no religion but in our own way; besides, that it gives great light to all kinds of knowledge and learning. If he would have been prevailed with to publish annotations upon his tables, and such historical dissertations, as I find he had furnished himself with materials for, I doubt not but they would have been both very acceptable and very useful.

About the year 1683, the meetings in Shrewsbury were suppressed, and he was then forced again into obscurity; and durst not be seen there, for fear of the Five-mile Act, which Mr. Bryan was brought into trouble upon. But in the year 1685, his dear wife going to Shrewsbury on some occasion, and dying suddenly there, he ventured thither to the last office of respect to her, which opportunity his enemies laid hold of, and it being just at the time of the Duke of Monmouth's attempt in the west, under pretence of that he was taken up, and sent prisoner to Chester castle, but upon the defeat of that attempt he was enlarged, and retired to London, where he lived very privately. Solomon speaks of a time when a *man is hid*, such a man.

But at the coming out of the liberty for dissenters in 1687, he returned to Shrewsbury, and joined with Mr. Bryan in the ministry there: and burning and shining lights they were in that place. And now they confined not themselves to the evening of the sabbath, as formerly; but some time after this revival of their liberty, they began to keep their meetings at the same time with the public worship, both parts of the day.

Upon occasion of that indulgence, he wrote for his own satisfaction a pretty large tract, which we find among his papers, concerning compelling people to the Christian religion, and punishing those who err in it. All agree, that those may be restrained and punished, who go against the light and law of nature, and disturb the civil government. But he undertakes to prove, that the magistrate is not to force Jews and heathens to embrace Christ's truth; nor those who err in matters of faith and worship, to own the right; nor to punish or destroy them if they will not: but that the same weapons are now to be used for the preserving and reforming of the church, which the apostles used for the planting of it; which were not carnal but spiritual; and yet mighty through God to pull down strong holds. He largely examines, not only the arguments, but the authorities, on both sides, and concludes, that Christ builds his church by faith and love, not by craft, violence, and persecution.

When King William and Queen Mary were happily settled on the throne, and each side seemed to come to a good temper, to promote it, he published a small tract of two or three sheets, which he called "Sure and Large Foundations." The design of which was to promote catholic Christianity and catholic charity, as the only healing methods.

Some overtures being made in that reign towards a comprehension, some worthy gentlemen who greatly valued his judgment, sent for him up to London, to discourse with him concerning it; particularly concerning the re-ordaining of those who were ordained by presbyters. Upon mature deliberation, he declared, he could not for his part submit to it; and drew up his reasons at large, which we find among his papers.

He not only pleaded for, but earnestly pressed, occasional conformity, as a token of the charity we have for those with whom we cannot statedly join, long before such a noise was made about it, with reference to offices; and it was his opinion, that as the dissenters, to show their charity, ought occasionally to hear the church ministers, and join with them in their worship, so the church ministers ought occasionally to hear the dissenters, and join with them in their worship; supposing that if they understood one another better, they would love one another better, and be brought nearer together.

In October, 1690, good Mrs. Hunt died, a great example in her place of serious piety, and all Christian virtues; lively and unwearied in the exercises of devotion, abounding in every thing that was good, free and charitable, and very active to promote religion, and the power of godliness, without any regard to parties. Upon her death, the meeting removed to Mr. Tallents's house about one year, while they were building and fitting up a very decent place for the purpose, which they entered upon, Oct. 25, 1691, Mr. Tallents preaching the first sermon on Isa. lvii. 15. *I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.* He caused it to be written upon the walls of the meeting-place, that it was built, "not for a faction or a party; but for promoting repentance and faith, in communion with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Adding that Scripture with which the French churches usually begin their public worship, *Our help stands in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.* He sometimes told his hearers, "If you come to be a people only differing from others in some opinions, but grow proud and carnal, and worldly and sensual, God will pull your place down; and let him pull it down."

He took all occasions to declare how much he hated from his heart the limiting of Christ's church to a particular opinion or party. We are far from thinking, said he, ourselves the only preachers, and condemning all others; as some do in effect, *Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me, to speak unto thee?* (1 Kings xxii. 24.) No, we rejoice that Christ is preached by many others: but we cannot think there

are so many good preachers, as that there is no need of us, or that we should be laid aside or forbidden; and therefore we say, as Elihu, without reflecting on others, *We also will speak*; we will throw in our mite; for we are called to the work, and therefore will lay out what God has given us, since the ministration of the Spirit is given to every one to profit withal. He made it his great business to preach Christ, and faith in Christ, as the great principle of holiness, which he said, he feared many spoke of very dimly and very coldly.

I cannot avoid taking notice here of a most impudent and malicious calumny, which the enemies of this good man cast upon him, "That he was a popish priest:" but if they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, much more them of his household. When he was at London in the year 1686, it happened that a desk he had left at Shrewsbury was opened by mistake, in which, among other things, was a piece of an old white damask bed scolloped, and a plain pair of slippers, and a book, in which was entered the names of his pupils in Magdalen College; a malicious fellow that was there reported, that "he saw in a desk of Mr. Tallents's such vestments as priests say mass in, full of crosses and images, and I know not what, and a book in which were the names of such as were admitted into the order of Jesuits." When Mr. Tallents came down, and found this base slander industriously spread to his prejudice, he had the fellow before the mayor, produced the things that were found in the desk, and so convicted him of falsehood and malice; but because he was a poor man, gave him no other trouble but that of a check from the mayor: yet there were those who would do all they could to support the slander; and one at length who happened to say it in the company of divers, again and again, "Tallents is a Jesuit, and he has read mass at St. Omer's, and I will prove it." There being full evidence of this man's speaking these words, Mr. Tallents was advised to bring an action against him; which he did, and it was tried at Shrewsbury assizes in 1693, and the man was cast; but he being poor, the jury brought in but fifty shillings damages.

In the year 1701, he buried his fourth wife, with whom he had lived about fourteen years in much comfort; upon which he left off house-keeping, and went to be a tabler; but still having care of the poor families of many, when he had none of his own.

In the year 1704 he wrote his excellent History of Schism, for the promoting of Christian moderation, and the communion of saints. He was in the eighty-fifth year of his age when he wrote that book, and as it is the product of a great deal of learning, so it is the result of a great deal of thought, of a mind deeply tinctured with Christian piety and charity, that found itself much aggrieved to hear many, who may justly be thought to fear God, and work righteousness, anathematized, and condemned to the pit of hell, for some mistakes (to say the worst) concerning church government and ceremonies. All the point that book aimed at the gaining of was, "It is possible a dissenter may be saved." A very modest postulatum, one would think, and easily granted to heathens and papists. But it seems, it might not be granted to the dissenters, at least not without reluctance; for the book was answered by one *S. G.* with a great deal of passion and indignation, upon Mr. Dodwell's principles. Mr. Tallents, like a Christian, a scholar, and a gentleman, answered it with fair reasoning and abundance of candour and meekness. *S. G.* replied with more falsehood and bitterness than before, with the most base misrepresentations, and most scurrilous reflections that could be. Some of Mr. Tallents's friends offered to expose and banter him, but he would by no means suffer it; and would himself have been at the pains mildly to show him his mistakes, but that some of his friends reminded him of the old observation—"He that fights with a dunghill, though he be a conqueror, is sure to come off dirtied;" and one worthy gentleman, who upon inquiry found out now who this *S. G.* was, sent Mr. Tallents an account of his character; adding, that it was one of the greatest honours ever done him, that he had once thought him worthy of his notice, and treated him with so much civility and respect, but that he would by no means have him trouble himself with him a second time. Answer not such a writer according to his writing.

Let us now observe something concerning him, and his character and conversation, which may be of use to us.

1. In all his address and conversation, he was a great example of giving honour to whom honour was due, and love to whom love. To persons of rank and figure, he was in the highest degree respectful and complaisant, nor have I ever known any more observant of the rules of decency, nor with a better grace, which was a great ornament to his learning and piety. To his intimate friends he was most affectionate and endearing; with what expressions of love he used to embrace them, and lay them in his bosom, how dear they were to him as his own soul, how he would be pleased and revived with the sight of them, and how naturally he cared for their state, must never be forgotten by those who were blessed with his friendship. To his inferiors he was remarkably condescending, would hear their complaints with great patience and tenderness, and with great freedom and familiarity discourse with those who desired his advice in their affairs, relating to this world or the other.

2. In his old age, he retained the learning both of the school and of the academy to admiration; and would readily repeat verbatim observable passages

of a great length out of the classic authors, as there was occasion, for the entertainment of his friends. Those who would be thus rich when they are old, must take pains when they are young. He had something to communicate to those who conversed with him concerning all sorts of learning, but history was his masterpiece, and in that no man more ready. He sometimes advised young students to trace learning to its fountains, and though they read new books, yet to keep the old ones by them, and dwell most upon them.

3. He abounded very much in pious ejaculations, as one who had learned to *pray always, to pray without ceasing*, and to intermix prayer and praise not only with the slumbers of the night, (which I have reason to think he did,) but with the conversation of the day. When he was in serious talk with his friends, how often would he send his heart to heaven, and direct theirs also that way, in such devout and holy breathings as these, "God look on us!" "God pity us!" When he heard that his friends he inquired after were in health and prosperity, with what seriousness and solemnity would he lift up his eyes and hands, and say, "God be praised!" If he heard of the afflictions of any of them, "God relieve them, refresh them, comfort them!" If of the falls of any, "God give them repentance!" If of the deaths of any, "*God fit us to die!*" When he sent his service unto his friends, he would usually add an ejaculatory prayer for them, "God do them good!" "The Lord refresh their souls with his love!" adding sometimes, "and my poor dry soul too!" As the slightly careless use of the expressions of prayer, as by-words, is an evidence of a vain mind, not possessed with a due reverence of God and his great name, and is really a profaning of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow to the Lord their God; so the serious and devout use of them, with the indications of a due attention and affection, is an evidence of the dominion of grace and holiness in the heart: and it is pity when the former is so much in use among the profane, his enemies, who take his name in vain, the latter should be so little in use among professors, his friends, who desire to give unto him the glory due unto his name. Of this instance of devotion Mr. Tallents was a great example.

4. He was very happy in counselling and advising his friends who applied themselves to him, according as their case and condition was, their temper, or their distemper. He knew how to speak a word in season to the weak, to the weary, to the wilful, to comfort with all tenderness, and yet to rebuke with all authority and faithfulness; and how to express at the same time a just indication against a sin, and yet a due compassion for sinners.

He sometimes expressed his fear concerning many weak, melancholy Christians, that they had tired themselves in the exercises of devotion; and would advise such to compose and quiet themselves, and keep their minds as calm and sedate as may be, and not aim to put them always upon the stretch. He would sometimes pleasantly say, "The quietest are the best Christians." And certainly we must take heed of placing religion too much in the passions and pangs even of holy love, for we truly honour and enjoy God not only in the elevations of the soul toward him, but the repose of the soul in him. *Return to thy rest, O my soul,* and be *at home,* be *at ease,* in God.

And as to the external performances of religion, he sometimes said, "Let the work of God be done, and done well, but with as little noise as may be:" *The kingdom of God comes not with observation.*

5. He was eminent for his charity; was charitable in his judgment and censures of others, and made the best of every body; charitable in forgiving injuries, and passing by affronts; and charitable to the poor, ready, very ready to every good work; not only exciting the charity of others, but exerting his own, to his power, yea, and beyond his power; sparing from himself to supply others: he was as dead to the wealth of this world as most men I ever knew, knowing no good in it, but doing good with it. The little he left behind him (much of which too he left to the poor, having no children) is an evidence for him, (as it was for Calvin at Geneva,) that he had no way of laying up what he had but by laying it out in works of charity, which is the surest way of laying up θεμελιον καλον—*a good security*, pawn or pledge, (so some understand it, 1 Tim. vi. 19.) *for the time to come*, and so *lay hold on eternal life.* He was particularly kind and charitable to strangers in distress, whom we must not be forgetful to entertain, (yet with prudence and caution,) because though some thereby have entertained devils incarnate, yet others thereby have entertained angels unawares, Heb. xiii. 2.

6. His preaching was very plain and familiar, but very affectionate, and that which manifestly came from the heart, and therefore was most likely to reach to the heart. He studied not words but things, remembering that of Minucius Felix, *Quo imperitior sermo, eo illustrior ratio est—The discourse would be lucid in proportion to its simplicity;* and that oftentimes there is most power and demonstration of the Spirit there where is least of the enticing words of man's wisdom. His explications were clear; his reasonings strong and convincing; and his quotations of Scripture very pertinent, and sometimes surprising.

I find a sermon on Jer. iii. 4. *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father?* which he begins thus, "My brethren, what shall I speak to you this day from the Lord, for your spiritual encouragement, and strengthening in the ways of the Lord? We

meet together for this end, and we have gracious promises, that he will be with us to teach and strengthen us: I have it in my heart at this time to tell you, that you are to look upon God as your Father, and to hold that fast in your hearts."

Another thus; "I would fain speak a good word to-day concerning Jesus Christ, for the good of you here present, and of my own soul."

Another thus; "What I have now to say, is that which has somewhat affected me in my own private thoughts, and I hope may affect and work upon you for good, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

He would often in his preaching speak with application to himself; "This word is to me, O that it may reach my heart." He frequently intermixed pious ejaculations with his preaching, and sometimes recommended it to others, as that which was both proper to affect the hearers, and the way to fetch in divine grace for the making of what he said effectual.

In times of distress, and fear, and expectation, he comforted himself and his friends, not only with the doctrine of God's universal providence, (many of the heathen encouraged themselves with that,) but he fetched his support chiefly from those principles which are purely Christian, as most proper for us, and most powerful, *That we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour*, (Heb. ii. 9.) and *that he nourisheth and cherisheth his church;* and not only protects, but *guards, it*, Eph. v. 29.

He was very frequent and earnest in pressing the necessity of brotherly love among Christians in the several instances of it, and reproving what is contrary to and destructive of it; love was the air he breathed in.

I remember once, when I came to visit him not long ago, he told me he had been preaching the day before concerning the Holy Ghost, and had observed, among other things, that he thought it was a defect among us, that we only prayed for the Holy Spirit, (as we are directed, Luke xi. 13.) and did not pray, so much as we should, to the Holy Spirit, for his gifts, and graces, and comforts, which we ought to do; for he is God, and therefore to be prayed to: and he mentioned the Litany for an example, *O God, the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon us.*

He earnestly pressed young ministers to preach Christ much, and the mystery of the gospel, wherein (says he) if I may judge of others by myself, we are generally so ignorant, and live so little by it; that enlightens, softens, humbles, sweetens the heart, and makes it truly fruitful and thankful.

He was much upon it in several sermons not long before he died, to show, that Christ our Lord merited for us, not only in his death, though chiefly then, but also in the obedience of his life: both his life and his death were exemplary to us, and meritorious for us.

7. I must observe, that he was in his judgment much for extolling free grace, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us for our justification, and the operation of the Spirit in us for our sanctification. A little before his death, he said that Scripture, Isa. lv. 1. *Without money and without price*, had often been his comfort and support; "For" (said he) "I have nothing but a poor naked soul to bring to Christ." He also said sometimes, that we must take heed of resting too much upon our covenanting with God; for it is by his promises to us that we partake of a divine nature, not by ours to him.

It was not long before his death that he wrote thus to me: I insert it both as a specimen of his letters to his friends, and an intimation of his sentiments in these things: "I send this by one that is a poor, melancholy, afflicted, grieved, but, I think, a holy woman; I hope I got good by my discourse with her. Alas, we are generally secure and dull, and any that are awakened indeed, and under temptations, are useful to such. Lately reading Luther's life in Melchior Adamus, besides other things, I find an excellent passage concerning justification by faith, which sets the matter most lively before us. *Nemo pro nostris peccatis mortuus est nisi solus Jesus Christus Filius Dei; iterum iterumque dico solus et unus Jesus Dei Filius a peccatis nos redemit; et impossibile est ut Christum aliter quam solâ fide amplectar, &c.—No one has died for our sins but Jesus Christ the Son of God; I repeat it, only Jesus Christ the Son of God has redeemed us from our sins; and I cannot receive Christ any other way than by reposing all confidence in him.* And shall we join our sufferings or obedience to his? Yet he died to purchase a holy people to himself, requires holiness in his, works it in them by the ways he appoints, and through holiness, which he makes necessary to salvation, will bring them to it. Farewell, dear sir, our God I trust will carry us on through faith to salvation. Let us pray for it in faith. Go on, rejoice in the Lord, abound in his work; and pray for poor old dull me, that I may not be altogether useless, but may finish my course with joy."

Take his sense of this with application to himself, as it is found in a paper written with his own hand. "I prayed much for the pardon of my sins, so great and many even to this day; for great mercies and forgivenesses, that righteousness may be imputed to me, Rom. iv. 11, 23. That I may be justified as holy Abraham was, by a righteousness imputed; as holy David was, having my sins covered, that is, by Christ's atonement; as all the saints have been, not by their own works and righteousness, (which is but rags,) but by the righteousness of Christ wrought for us, the righteousness which is of God by faith, and be found in that. Let me live by that, and have peace with God by it; if others despise it, let me highly praise it; if others cast it away, let me

live by that; if others speak against it, let me make my boast of it; let it be my joy, my crown, my life, my peace, my glorying, my all. Let his Spirit be imparted to me, to sanctify, to rule me; his righteousness be imputed to me; this is all my hope, that I may be found in the crowd, among the many thousands of God's people, (Numb. x. 36.) whom he cares for and loves, though but among the least of them, a little member of that great body." Such as these were the constant breathings of his pious soul.

Let me add one thing upon this, that though he differed much from Mr. Baxter, concerning justification and other things, yet he highly valued that great man for his learning and piety, and the service he had done the church by his practical writings, and often spoke of him with great respect and affection.

He took occasion sometimes to speak the hopes he had of the flourishing of the Christian church in the latter days; that the Jews should be converted, the papal antichristian kingdom destroyed, and religion, in the power of it, should prevail. He grounded his hopes on the prophecies of the New Testament; "And," said he, "when God shall repair the breaches of his church, and build it up greatly, the subtilties of the schools, and many canons of councils, and customs of old, will be laid aside, and a great simplicity in things of faith and worship shall be owned and practised; no more conditions shall be made for communion of churches, than Christ makes for communion with him, and uniformity in smaller matters shall not be made necessary to unity."

We have now nothing to do, but to give some account of the end of this good man's conversation. It pleased that God, in whose hand our times are, to lengthen or shorten as he pleases, to continue him long a burning and a shining light in his church; purely to his good providence it must be attributed, and not to any thing that appeared extraordinary either in his constitution or management of himself. Moses observed, that in his time, if men lived to be fourscore years, even their strength was then commonly labour and sorrow; but here was one who went almost nine years beyond that, and yet his strength did not seem to be labour and sorrow, but he continued both cheerful and useful to the last, even in those evil days, of which men commonly say they have no pleasure in them; he had the pleasure of looking backward upon the grace of God bestowed upon him, and forward upon the glory of God prepared for him, and little of bodily pain and distemper to be an allay to his pleasure. Thus in his advanced years he continued to walk humbly with God in holy security and serenity of mind, and a believing expectation of the glory to be revealed.

In the year 1699, Mr. Bryan, who had long been his fellow-labourer in Shrewsbury, finished his course with joy: thereupon Mr. James Owen of Oswestry was chosen to join with him in the work of the ministry there; but it pleased God to put an end to his most useful life and labours in April, 1706. Upon his death they chose Dr. Benion, then minister at Broad Oak, who came and settled among them that year, and was every way agreeable both to Mr. Tallents and to the people, but *Te tantum terris ostendunt Fata nec ultra esse sinunt*, he had soon finished his testimony, and was remanded (March 4, 1707-8) when he had been but a year and three quarters at Shrewsbury. He was very dear to Mr. Tallents, and as a son with the father, so did he serve with him in the gospel; and his death did accordingly go very near him, he scarce looked up with any cheerfulness after.

He had had a very little sickness; but as he grew into years, complained sometimes of faintness, and feebleness, and shortness of breathing, which obliged him to favour himself a little in his work; and if he had spent himself but in discourse with his friends, he found it requisite to retire and repose himself a little.

On Wednesday, March 24, about a fortnight after the doctor was buried, as he was washing him, and for ought appeared as well as he used to be, he fainted away of a sudden, and had fallen to the ground, if those about him had not been immediately aware of it and helped him. In a little time he came to himself, and the next day wrote a letter in his bed, made some alterations in his will, gave directions about his funeral, and then addressed himself to his dying work, with the holy cheerfulness that became so good a Christian, as one who had nothing else to do but to die. Sometimes he intimated, that if it were the will of God, he could desire to live a little while to see the congregation well settled under another minister, and there was sometimes hope of his recovery, and that he might yet have been instrumental therein; but the wise God, whose judgments are a great deep, ordered otherwise, that he should leave them just at a time when they most needed him. Many a time after Dr. Benion's death, he prayed earnestly to God to provide good ministers for that congregation, which lay so near his heart. And since his death, we have seen his prayers answered: but God will show that he can do his own work without the agency even of those instruments that we think necessary, and depend most upon. He uses the service of many, but needs the service of none.

And though to abide in the flesh might well be thought, especially at that juncture, more profitable for them, yet he soon got over that difficulty, and left the care of the sheep to the great Shepherd, who when he has work to do will never want fit instruments to do it with. He therefore prayed, that

if his work were done, he might be, by the grace of God, not only willing, but desirous, to depart, and to be with Christ, which he knew to be far better.

He charged all about him, that they should not pray for his life, but that he might be enabled patiently to wait for his change.

When he came to himself, by God's blessing on the use of means, from that fainting fit, with which his illness began, he said to those about him, "Why did you not let a poor old man go away quietly?" He often expressed his repentance for sin, and his reliance on Christ alone; and some days before he died, he blessed God that he was more full of inward comfort and joy than he was able to express.

He complained very little either of pain or sickness, but gradually decayed, and burnt lower and lower, like a candle in the socket. He often prayed to God for a blessing on those about him, and said, "Here I lie waiting, waiting." After some time he began to think it long that he had not his release, and to cry, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;* but he knew God's time is the best, and therefore would wait with patience for it; for the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie.

On Lord's day, April 11, 1708, he said he would have those about him go to worship God in the solemn assembly, and would have only one to stay with him. That day he took more refreshment, and seemed to be more revived, than he had been of some time before. Divers savoury words dropped from him; and he continued very sensible, calling upon God, till about nine or ten o'clock that evening, when he sweetly slept in Jesus, and on that day of rest, entered into his everlasting rest. Praised be that God by whose grace he was enabled to finish well.

On Thursday following, (April 15,) the dear remains were solemnly deposited in St. Mary's church, and a sermon preached at his own meeting-place the same evening on that sad occasion, and many, very many, did him honour at his death, as they did to Jehoiada, (who died in a good old age,) *because he had done good in Israel.*

A paper was found after his death, appointing what epitaph should be inscribed on his grave-stone, and expressing the year of his life then current; intimating, that he did not expect to out-live that year.

*Reliquiæ D. Francisci Tallents, Olim Col. Magd. Cant. Sen. Socij, Postea Concionatoris Publici in hac Ecclesiâ ab Ann.* 1652. *ad Aug.* 24, 1662. *Qui post varios Labores, expectans misericordiam Domini nostri Jesu Christi in vitam æternam tandem decessit, Anno Ætatis suæ* 89. *Mense die—*

*The remains of D. F. Tallents, formerly Fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge, afterwards preacher in this church from* 1652, *to Aug.* 24, 1662: *who, after various labours, expecting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, died in the* 89*th year of his age.*

# A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

# FUNERAL OF MR. SAMUEL LAWRENCE,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT NANTWICH IN CHESHIRE.

WITH A CONCISE ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

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PHILIPPIANS ii. 27.

*Lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.*

O THAT the occasion of our meeting here to-day had been such, that this whole verse had been applicable to it! If when our dear brother (whose remains we have just now laid in the silent grave) was sick, nigh unto death, God had heard our prayers, had seen our tears, had ordered the sun of life to go back, or rather the shadow of it, (for it is but a shadow,) and had added to his days, as to Hezekiah's, and we had been met here to return thanks for his recovery, with what pleasure should I have applied this whole verse to such a joyful occasion; *For indeed he was sick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him, and* spared him, and *not on him only, but on me also,* and on you likewise, and on many others, *lest we should have sorrow upon sorrow.*

But alas, this is not our case; it is not a song of praise that is this day put into our mouths, but a song of lamentation; nor is the case any longer within the reach of prayer. While our friend was yet alive, we wept and made supplication, for we said, *Who can tell but God will yet be gracious to us, and he shall live.* We pleaded, *Shall Jonathan die,* (1 Sam. xiv. 45.) who has been instrumental of so much good to the souls of many, who is such a blessing to Israel, and likely to be more so, likely in a course of nature to be long so? But now he is dead, though we desire patiently to submit to the holy will of God, and to reconcile ourselves to this dark dispensation, acknowledging that God is just in this which he has brought upon us, yet we think we may have liberty to bemoan ourselves under so sore a breach made upon our comforts; nay, we think it is our duty, when we sow such precious seed, sow it in corruption and dishonour, though we believe it shall be raised again in glory and incorruption, yet to bear it forth weeping, and to sow it in tears. If Jonathan be fallen we cannot but say, *We are distressed for him,* for *very pleasant has he been unto us,* and therefore very painful must it needs be to have him thus suddenly rent from us, in the midst of his great usefulness.

We have occasion then, at present, to make use only of the last words of the verse, *Sorrow upon sorrow.* That which Paul dreaded, but it was by the mercy of God prevented, in the case of Epaphroditus, we feel we have, I am sure I feel I have, *sorrow upon sorrow,* a complication, an addition, of sorrows, which ought to be no surprise to us in this vale of tears, this lower region, where the clouds return after the rain, in a world where we are bid to expect tribulation, and to count upon it.

Our observation from the text, with application to the present sad occasion, though it be only implied, yet rises easily and naturally. If Epaphroditus had died, Paul, who was now already in great distress, by reason of his removal and distance from his friends at Philippi, would have had sorrow upon sorrow; the sorrow of burying one friend, upon the sorrow of being separated from many more: and therefore when such a one as Epaphroditus was, is removed from us by death, we have sorrow upon sorrow; that is, we have *great sorrow,* many sorrows included in this one. And sometimes Providence so orders the circumstances of this affliction, that it is, to those who are nearly interested in the case, (as Paul was in that of Epaphroditus,) one sorrow added to another, like Job's messengers; as the waves of the sea, *deep calling unto deep.* Broken with breach upon breach.

To accommodate this to our present purpose, we

must consider who this Epaphroditus was, whose death would have been so great a grief to St. Paul. He was an evangelist; not only in the larger signification of the word, a *preacher of the gospel*, a *bringer of good tidings*, but in its more peculiar sense, he was an assistant to the apostles in founding and planting churches. Such was Timothy, Titus, Silas, and others, who were sometimes the apostles' companions and associates in their itinerant work, sometimes their substitutes and agents; whom they sent where they could not come, or left where they could not stay, to set in order the things that were wanting; to settle the churches which the apostles had planted under the conduct of their ordinary pastors and teachers, and then to leave them. This Epaphroditus is the same with that Epaphras, Col. i. 7. who first preached the gospel at Colosse, and planted a church there; afterwards was for some time at Philippi, and watered the church there; and was now at Rome, sent thither by the Philippians on an errand to St. Paul, and sent back by St. Paul to them with this epistle.

Now we may look upon this good man,

1. As a dear friend of Paul's, and one whom he had a great love and value for. He calls him here, (*v.* 25.) his brother and companion in labour, and his fellow-soldier; and, (Col. i. 7.) his dear fellow-servant. St. Paul was the chief of the apostles, excelled them all in gifts, and graces, and usefulness, was a prime minister of state in Christ's kingdom, yet see his humility; he accepts the help of Epaphroditus, who was every way his inferior, makes use of it, rejoices in it, and is afraid of being deprived of it. Much more reason have we to acknowledge the need we have of our brethren's help, and to be thankful for it, to see the advantage we have by it for the strengthening of our hands, and the carrying on of our work, and to see what losers we are by their removal; nay, we are ignorant of ourselves, if we esteem not others better than ourselves, and reckon not that we could be better spared.

Paul calls Epaphroditus his brother, for all we are brethren; all true Christians, all faithful ministers, are so, for they have all one and the same Father, and all belong to one and the same family. He calls him his *companion in labour*, for he was engaged in the same work; and his *fellow-soldier*, for he was engaged in the same warfare; and the share he had with him in services and sufferings increased Paul's affection to him. If he be his fellow-servant, and be such a one as he should be, he is a *dear fellow-servant*, Paul's heart is upon him, and he loves him as his own soul. It becomes the servants of Jesus Christ, not only to love their Master, but to love their fellow-servants, to call them their *dear fellow-servants*, not jealous of their rivalship, or envious at their success, but taking pleasure in them and their prosperity. Fellow-soldiers who have ventured their lives together, should thereby have their hearts knit together. Epaphroditus was upon this account dear to Paul, who, therefore, could scarce bear the thoughts of parting with him.

2. As a faithful servant to the churches, whose care was not confined to one church, but was extended to many. He laid out himself to promote every thing that was good among Christians; he is your messenger, one that you have employed, and put a confidence in, one that you have made your representative, that manages the affairs of your church so wisely, so well. Epaphroditus, as it should seem, was now sent by the Philippians to Rome to attend Paul, to see what he wanted, and to bring him some supplies which they had collected for him.

This was he who was *sick*, *nigh unto death*, and if he had died it would have been an occasion of great sorrow to Paul, for though Paul was a man who had the command of his passions, yet he was not a stock or a stone, or a stoic, void of passion; our Lord Jesus himself was not; because he loved Lazarus, he wept over his grave, John xi. 35, 36. and has warranted us to do so; and here we have occasion for it. Though we pretend not to compare our friends and fellow-servants *with*, yet we hope we may compare them *to*, St. Paul's friends and fellow-servants; they walk (though not *passibus æquis—with equal steps*) in the same spirit, and in the same steps, and therefore we ought to be in like manner affected with their removal.

DOCT. The death of faithful ministers is just cause for sorrow, and sometimes, especially, it is so circumstanced that it becomes sorrow upon sorrow.

I. The death of faithful ministers is just cause for sorrow; parting with them is a very mournful thing, yea, though they have continued long in their usefulness, and some may think it is time they should go off to make room for others, yet in that case their death is to be lamented, as Elisha's was by the king of Israel, 2 Kings xiii. 14. though he was then very old, and we had heard nothing of him a great while; and we must thus show that we have esteemed them highly in love for their work's sake. Yea, though they should die martyrs, and should themselves rejoice to be offered up, yet in that case, as in Stephen's, *devout men* will *make great lamentation for* them;[a] much more is it to be lamented when there is not that gain to the church by their deaths, and might long have been in all probability great gain to the church by their lives. It is justly reckoned an argument of great stupidity, if, when such men are taken away, we do not consider it, and lay it to heart. Observe,

1. Ministers, faithful ministers, are subject to the

[a] Acts viii. 2.

stroke of death as well as others. They know themselves, and we know, that they must certainly and shortly put off this their tabernacle; *Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?* We see they do not.

They are not exempted from death, for the treasure is put into earthen vessels; they also are formed out of the clay, though they are to us in God's stead, and they must return to their dust. They are indeed called the angels of the churches, such is the dignity of their office, but alas we find them mortal dying men; and when they are subject to like passions as others, it is not strange they are subject to like strokes as others. The law made men priests, and the gospel makes men ministers, who had infirmity, and therefore could not continue, could not continue long, by reason of death, which must be and will be where sin is.

Nay, they are exposed more than others; death is working in them, when life in you; their work wastes them, their sorrows wear them, and they gladly spend, and cannot but be spent, for you. A wicked world is ready to say, Away with them, they are not worthy to live;[b] a gracious God says, Away with them, the ungrateful world is not worthy of them;[c] so that the point seems to be agreed, that good men must not live long in this world.

2. Death is the occasion of grief; ordinarily it is so; when man goes to his long home the mourners go about the streets. The house where death is, is called the house of mourning; it is so unless either those who are removed were, or those who are left behind are, void of natural affection. There was a great cry throughout Egypt, when there was not a house in which there was not one dead.[d] It is death reigning in this world as it does, that makes it a vale of tears; in heaven, and there only, where there is no more *death*, all tears are wiped away from men's eyes.

3. The death of good ministers ought to be in a special manner mourned for; this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, as much as any death. Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, were men that all Israel went into real mourning for. The death of ministers makes God's house a house of mourning, and sensibly affects those who are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, to whom the reproach of it is a burthen. Then the ways of Zion mourn, when the guides and overseers in those ways are removed; then her elders put on sackcloth, when those who were the ornaments of the elders' seat are removed.

(1.) It is matter of sorrow to the people. They were the messengers of the churches, God's messengers to them by the word; messengers of good tidings, whose feet upon that account were beautiful; they were their messengers to God by prayer, who many a time went to the throne of grace on their errands, spread their case before the Lord, and made intercession for them, and were helpers of their joy; they were interpreters. Now the removal of such ought to be sadly lamented, because it breaks in upon the intercourse we have with heaven, the keeping up of which is so much our business and so much our bliss in our present state.

When these messengers are called away by death, you ought to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep.

[1.] Because of the love which we hope you bare to them, that you may testify and express it. They loved you, and *travailed in birth again for you*, till they saw some good evidence of Christ's being formed in you. You know how they exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his children; how near their hearts your spiritual welfare lay, what a grief it was to them when any of you walked disorderly, and how much your well-doing was their joy. You have perceived what a tender concern they have had for you, *Who is weak, and I am not weak?* what a fear they have been in concerning you, lest you should come short, lest you should seem to come short. Many have been the proofs of their love to you, and it may be, your own hearts tell you, that while they were with you, you gave them not the proofs you should have given them of your love to them: you were wanting in your duty; you did not attend on their ministry so constantly, nor attend to it so carefully, as you should have done; your profiting did not appear, but the contrary, and this grieved the hearts of those who should have had joy of you. Will you testify your love to them now they are gone, by bewailing the removal of them? Thus at length show the value you had for them, and make up what has been wanting in the instances of your love to them. Let their deaths be lamented, to show that their lives were desired.

[2.] Because of the loss which you know you have of them, and not you only, but others also; for their usefulness is extensive, and their lives a blessing to many. The loss of a faithful minister is a public loss; we are to reckon those our best friends who are our *soul's friends*, and therefore the loss of such friends, the greatest loss of that kind.

You here have lost one who long approved himself a skilful faithful friend to your souls; one who was excellently well qualified for the service of your faith, and the help and furtherance of your holiness and joy. He was one who knew how to divide the word of truth aright, and to give each of you your portion of meat in due season. He was one who, to my knowledge, in his youth laid in

[b] Acts xxii. 22. [c] Heb. xi. 38. [d] Exod. xii. 30.

a good stock of useful learning, and which is more, knew how to make use of it. He was a scribe well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, and could bring out of his treasury things new and old, for the improvement of the most grown Christians, and yet, both in his preaching and in his conversation, knew how to condescend and accommodate himself to the capacity of the meanest, to feed the babes with milk, and the grown men with strong meat. He preached to you in a method, that you might see the truths you are to believe, and the duties you are to do in their order, and their reference to each other, which will render the one more intelligible and the other more practicable. He preached to you in his conversation, which was of a piece with his doctrine; he was an example to the believers in every thing that is praise-worthy, and was both a burning and a shining light. That which he aimed at was your profit, as one who naturally cared for your state.

O that you would sorrow after a godly sort, would sorrow according to God, and with an eye to him, for the death of one who was so much your helper in the things of God; that you would sorrow for the loss your poor children sustain by his death, the lambs of your flock, whom he fed with food convenient for them, in his public catechising. I trust there are many of you to whom he was, through grace, a spiritual father, who by his ministry were brought savingly to Christ; such have reason to lament the taking away of one quite out of their reach, with whom they might have consulted concerning their progress in the way to heaven, but whom they can now not only not hear, but not hear from. But especially, O that you would sorrow for your sins, your carelessness and unfruitfulness under his ministry, which has separated between you and your minister, and has provoked God to deprive you of such a privilege. All our tears should be turned into this channel.

(2.) It is matter of sorrow to us who are ministers; for they were our companions, our fellow-servants, who laboured with us in the same work; our fellow-soldiers, who exposed themselves with us in the same warfare. Though St. Paul had as little need of help as any minister ever had, though the Holy Ghost was given by his hands, so that if one was removed, he knew which way to expect the raising up of another, yet the death of a faithful minister was very much his sorrow; and much more reason there is why it should be ours.

[1.] We have cause for it. Our hands are this day weak through our own infirmities, and they are weakened by such providences, so that the work is either not done, or not so well done; we are disheartened and discouraged, and drive heavily when thus our chariot-wheels are taken off. We need help, we need such help, and at every turn shall find the want of it, and reflect with sorrow upon the withering of such a hand, as was so much our right hand.

Much is required to make an able minister of the New Testament, abundance of gifts and graces, study and experience, a good head and a good heart. It is long ere a minister grows up to maturity; the choicest fruits ripen slowly. Many hopeful buds and blossoms are blasted, and those that promised fair disappoint us, and never bring forth fruit to perfection. Many are plucked off by death, while they are yet in the blossom, they come forth like a flower, and are cut down in the beginning of their usefulness, and therefore, to be deprived of such a one as we have now lost, who was beginning, and but beginning, to be an elder in age, as well as an elder in office; who was grown by observation and experience fit to be a father to the sons of the prophets, and a very wise and tender one he was, and thereby to strengthen the hands of his brethren; who was a great example of humility, consideration, and conscientiousness; *this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation*, especially when (according to the reason there given) among all the branches of our vine there are so few that are *strong rods* for *sceptres to rule*.

Let the priests the Lord's ministers mourn between the temple and the altar, for there, in the courts of the Lord's house, they will find a loss of him who was so good a helper with them in the service of the tabernacle. We have lost one who laboured in the word and doctrine, and ought therefore to be accounted worthy of double honour; of honour while he lived, the honour of being beloved; and of honour at his death, the honour of being lamented.

[2.] It will do us good. It will be for our spiritual benefit, not only to admit but to enforce the impressions of sorrow upon this occasion. By the sadness arising from this stroke of divine providence, our hearts and our lives may be made better, and we may have reason to say, *It was good for us to go to such a house of mourning*, though it is bad for us that such houses of mourning are made among us. That which makes so much against us, if we be duly affected with it, may by the grace of God be made to work for us; *out of the eater may come forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness*. We whose business it is to teach others to improve such providences, are ourselves inexcusable, if we do not lay them to heart, as the living are concerned to do.

If we sorrow aright for the death of our brethren, it will help to fix upon our minds that seriousness which is so necessary to every Christian, and, especially, to a minister, and to mortify that lightness and airiness which very much unfits for the employments and enjoyments of the spiritual and divine life. This sadness will help to compose our vain minds, and dispose them for serious work, and to

preserve that decorum upon our whole behaviour which becomes our profession, and will contribute so much to the great ends of it. That really does us good which helps to make us grave and sober-minded, and our spirits are wretchedly dissipated, if this will not do it.

It will stir us up to double our diligence in our Master's work. Do we grieve for the loss of them who are removed? Let us endeavour in some measure to make up the loss, by laying out ourselves so much the more in the service of Christ and the souls of men; let us pray better, and preach better, and live better, that we may each of us do something toward filling up the gap. In two scriptures we find the consideration of this, that death is a period to the usefulness of good men in this world, urged as an argument with the survivors to abound so much the more in honouring God: one is Ps. cxv. 17, 18. *The dead praise not the Lord*, as they did while they were alive; *neither any that go down into silence;* praying, praising, preaching lips are closed in the grave; but we will bless the Lord, because they cannot do it, we will do it the more fervently, the more constantly, and will endeavour that it may be done by a seed, by a succession of saints, when we also are gone, from this time forth and for evermore. The other is in Hezekiah's writing, Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19. *The grave cannot praise thee*, as the pulpit does, *death cannot celebrate thee*, nor the congregation of the dead, as the assembly of God's Israel does; and therefore *the living, the living, they shall praise thee*, with so much the more life and liveliness; and that the work may not sink and die in our hands, *the fathers to the children shall make known thy truth*, that they may be praising God on earth, when we are praising him in heaven.

It will put us in mind of our latter end, of the period that will then be put to our work, and the account that must then be given up of it. They are gone, and we are going, and we know not whose turn it will be to go next; probably ours who were nearest in age, who, therefore, are the more concerned to take the alarm. When our fathers are removed in a full age, we are perhaps tempted to think it will be many years before it comes to our turn to be gathered to them, and so to think of death as a thing at a distance; but when our brethren are removed, those who were brought up with us, and are of the same standing, we are bid to think of dying, not only as certain, but as very near; *Behold, the judge standeth before the door.* This forbids us to say in our hearts, *Our Lord delays his coming*, and speaks aloud in our ears, *The Lord is at hand.* Moses and Aaron are much of an age, there is but three years between them, and therefore when Aaron is dead, God puts Moses in mind of following him quickly: *Thou also shalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered,* Numb. xxvii. 13. You commonly say to those who are but a very little younger than you, "When I die for age, you must quake for fear;" yet if you have made sure your interest in Christ, you will see cause not to quake for fear, but to sing for joy; but when those of the same age with us die, though not for age, it is a call to us to think of dying,—of dying shortly. Why may not our strength be weakened in the way, and our days shortened, as theirs were, and the number of our months be cut off in the midst? O that this consideration might be so impressed upon us who are ministers, that we might by it be quickened and engaged to apply ourselves more closely and vigorously to our great business, that we may finish comfortably and well. Our blessed Lord stirred up himself with this consideration, *I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, for the night cometh, when no man can work.* The nearer our time draws to an end, the more concerned we are to fill it up with duty, and with that which will turn to a good account, that we may give up our account with joy. And if thus we sow in these tears, the harvest hereafter will be pleasant; if the good lessons which these providences teach us be taken out and well learned, we shall have reason to say, that *sorrow is better than laughter;* and that our loss is not only their gain, but our gain too. Our dear brother *being dead, yet speaketh*, thus speaketh, "*Therefore be ye also ready*, and in order to that, be ye also busy, be always abounding in the Lord." We e no time to lose who have so much work to go through, and have lost so much time already. Let us not, under colour of prolonging our lives, indulge our ease, lest by so saving our lives we lose them; the more uncertain life is, the more need we have to spend it well, for that is the way to end it well; and *blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he comes shall find so doing.*

II. Sometimes the death of faithful ministers is so circumstanced, that it is sorrow upon sorrow; that was the thing St. Paul dreaded in the death of Epaphroditus, and it is what we feel at this time. God renews his witnesses against us, and multiplies our wounds.

1. When many breaches of this kind are made upon us about the same time, then we have sorrow upon sorrow. Death is always reigning in every place, and every week brings in its bills of mortality, but we reckon it a sore and signal judgment, if an epidemical distemper makes the numbers of the dead in a little time more than usual; it is true the prophets do not live for ever, the labourers must be called out of the vineyard, when they shall have accomplished as a hireling their day. But when many are removed in a little time in the same country, and those most of them in the midst of their days and usefulness, we must be very stupid if we hear not the voice of God in it. I can name about

seventeen* dissenting ministers here within our neighbourhood, and acquaintance, who have been removed in little more than seven years; many of them I have done this mournful office for, that I am now doing for this dear brother of mine, and of them all, only two that (as I think) were above 55 years old, and those two were considerably above 80, Mr. Tallents and Mr. Cope; six or seven I take to have been about 50, and the rest under 40. And is not this sorrow upon sorrow? Have not the deaths of our brethren in the ministry been brought us by Job's messengers? *While one is yet speaking, comes in another.*

And what shall we say to these things? What is this that God has done unto us? What is it that God would have us to do? What is it that he says to us by these repeated strokes of the same rod? what is the meaning of it? and what the mind of him who has appointed it?

(1.) God does hereby plainly reprove for our former stupidity and senselessness, under the breaches of this kind that were made upon us; good men, good ministers, have been taken from us, and we have not considered it, and laid it to heart as we ought to have done; and therefore God has proceeded in this controversy with us, for when he judges he will overcome, will humble the unhumbled. If the work be not done and the point gained by one affliction, another may reasonably be expected. *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see.* When one good minister has been taken away, perhaps we have been tempted to think, the matter is not great, there is *more than enough;* but God will make us know that we have none to spare, and that if we depend upon our numbers he can soon lessen them.

We have not been duly affected with the losses of this kind which other congregations have sustained, as if we were not concerned in them, nor were in danger of the like; as if our mountain stood so strong that it could not be moved, and we have thereby provoked God to come nearer us, and to make us feel the smart of that rod upon our own back, which we have not heard the voice of upon the back of others. It is a method God takes in other afflictions, those must be made to suffer who will not be made to sympathize; for sooner or later, one way or other, God will be heard, he will be heeded.

(2.) God does hereby plainly warn us of judgments coming. We are to look upon it as a sad token of his displeasure against us; nay, if we make not a right improvement of it, it is well if it prove not a bad omen of his departure from us. The removal of so many candles out of their places, is a step towards, and a threatening of, the removal of the candlestick itself out of its place; which we have deserved, because we have *left our first love*, and have not *repented and done our first works.* God designs by these providences to awaken us out of our security, that we may not flatter ourselves with a conceit, that to-morrow will be as this day; and to stir us up to our duty, which is to prepare to meet our God; to stand in the gap which is hereby made. and make good the breach against the judgments which threaten by it to pour in upon us.

*Hear ye the Lord's controversy*, which he has with his people, and which *he will plead; Hear ye the Lord's voice*, crying to the city, to the country, and *see his name in it.* Why? How does it appear that God is contending with us? The prophet gives you an instance of it soon after, *The good man is perished out of the earth*, and I *am as when they have gathered the summer fruits*—stript of my glory. What is to be said at such a time? We must not only say, as the prophet there, *Woe is me*, but as the Psalmist on the like occasion, *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, the faithful fail.* When we are bemoaning our losses, we must apply ourselves to him, who is alone able to make them up; when godly, faithful people cease and fail, it is high time to cry, *Help, Lord.*

Let the good impressions of such providences as these abide with us, and let them not wear off; we are apt to be affected with them for the present, but we soon forget them, and *settle upon our lees* again, as those, who having been at ease from our youth, are desirous still to be so; which makes it necessary, that God in his providence should be still emptying us from vessel to vessel, shifting hands with us, for otherwise *our taste remaineth in us, and our scent is not changed*, Jer. xlviii. 11. Let us take heed lest, by returning to our former security, we provoke God to proceed in his controversy; but by daily prayers to God, let us endeavour to turn away his wrath, and by a continual good improvement of the many breaches of this kind that have been made upon us, let us stand between the living ministers and the dead, that this plague may be staid. *O lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left*, an earnest prayer that God would not make a full end, but would spare his people, and spare his ministers to them, according to the multitude of his mercies.

2. When we have this sorrow mingled with other sorrows; when grief for the death of our ministers is added to other grievances, so that there is a complication of griefs, then we have sorrow upon sorrow. This would have been Paul's case if Epaphroditus had died; he was now in sorrow, not so much for his own sufferings, he knew how to glory and rejoice in them, but because he was absent from the Philip-

* Mr. Cope of Haslington, in 1704. Mr. Chorlton of Manchester, 1705. Mr. Latham of Wem, and Mr. Owen of Salop, Mr. Holland of Lostock, Mr. Long of Wrexam, in 1706. Mr. Tallents and Dr. Benion, both of Salop, and Mr. Jonathan Harvey of Chester, 1708. Mr. Low of Knutsford, and Mr. Evans of Oswestry, in 1709. Mr. Nailor of St. Ellens, 1710. Mr. Peyton of Stafford, Mr. Brian of Newcastle, Mr. Jenkin Thomas of Wrexam, and Mr. Eaton of Manchester, in 1711. And now Mr. Lawrence, in 1712.

pians, and others of his friends who were dear to him, and wanted to know their state; and especially because he saw a general decay of serious godliness among ministers and Christians; *Some preach Christ of envy and strife, and all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's:* this was Paul's sorrow, and if now he had lost Epaphroditus, one who *preached Christ out of love* to him, and who *naturally cared for the state* of souls, it would have been sorrow upon sorrow; and this also is our case.

How far my own present grief, which lies heavy upon me beyond what I could have thought, directed my thoughts upon this sad occasion to this melancholy theme of sorrow upon sorrow, I shall not say, the heart best knows its own bitterness, and feels most from its own burthen; but upon many accounts of common concern, we may truly call this sorrow upon sorrow.

(1.) The abounding of atheism and infidelity, vice and profaneness, in our land is our sorrow; we behold the transgressors and are grieved; I am sure we ought to be so, to see them so numerous, so impudent; and rivers of tears should run down our eyes, because there are so few that keep God's law, and so many who break it. The general corruption of men's principles and manners, the abounding of impiety and immorality, and the inefficacy of the endeavours used for reformation, are matter of sorrow to all good people; righteous souls are vexed from day to day, as Lot's was, with the filthy conversation of the unrighteous; and we hope there is a remnant who mourn in secret, and cover their faces, for that wickedness which is committed openly, and goes barefaced, that sigh and cry for the abominations of the land, that blush before God for that wickedness for which they that are guilty of it will not blush before men. It is sad to see and to hear how God's name is profaned, his law broken, his word vilified, his sabbath polluted, his creatures abused, how men wrong and abuse, how they *bite and devour, one another.*

And if this be a sorrow, as certainly it is, the taking away of those from the midst of us, who were, in their places, God's witnesses against the wickedness of the wicked, who helped to put vice out of countenance, and to make iniquity stop her mouth; who, by the Spirit of the Lord, lifted up a standard against this enemy who comes in like a flood; the silencing of the faithful watchmen, who warned the wicked in God's name to turn from his wicked way, must needs be sorrow upon sorrow. Men of probity and sincerity could never be worse spared than now, when men speak vanity every one to his neighbour, and there are so few who can be confided in.

(2.) The decay of serious piety, among those who make a profession of it, is our sorrow. It may justly grieve us to see not only how iniquity abounds, but how the love of many waxes cold; love to their God, to their Bibles, to their brethren; devout affections ebb and abate; the *kindness of our youth* is forgotten, and that of *our espousals.* It is our sorrow, to see so little of the power of godliness among those who retain the form of it; to see family worship neglected, sabbath time trifled away, Bibles and good books seldom looked into, religious conference forgotten and quite laid aside, solemn assemblies indifferently attended, and the word preached carelessly heard. It is sad to see how little there is among us of the pious zeal and strictness of the good old puritans; how the things that remain are ready to die, and our works are not found filled up before God; but what a woful deficiency there is of what should be, and a woful degeneracy from what has been, among professors.

And if this be a sorrow, surely it may well be reckoned sorrow upon sorrow, when those are taken away by death, in whom so much of serious piety was kept up, and by whose means we might hope to see it, through the grace of God, in some measure revived. It adds to our grief, to see a family beheaded, and by that means broken up and scattered, in which God's name was so constantly called upon, his word read and opened, and his praises sung, now, when in so many houses the altar of the Lord is broken down, or gone to decay. When we have been bewailing the defection and backsliding of many who began in the Spirit, then to follow those to their graves, who not only still held fast their integrity themselves, but we hoped might have been instrumental to reduce and recover those that were gone astray; this may well be called, sorrow upon sorrow.

(3.) The contempt cast upon the religious assemblies which we adhere to, and in which we think we have met with God, is our sorrow. It is made the character of those whom God has distinguishing favours in reserve for, that they are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, to whom the reproach of it is a burthen; and a great many solemn assemblies there are among us, on which we have reason to say, God has put honour, that yet are loaded with reproach, and exceedingly filled with the scorning of those who are at ease. The assemblies of those who we know to be united by holy faith and love to Christ, and through him to his church, are reproached as by schism cut off from the church, and therefore from Christ and the covenant, and the hope of salvation, for no other reason but because their ministers were ordained as Timothy was, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, and not by a diocesan bishop. The assemblies of those who we know to be peaceable and quiet in the land, are reproached without any colour of reason, like the assemblies of the primitive Christians, as factious, and seditious, and hurtful to kings and provinces. The masters of those assemblies, though we know them to be ready and mighty in the Scriptures, skilful in the word of

righteousness, yet are reproached by many as unlearned and ignorant men. Many such as these are the reproaches of the solemn assemblies, which are our sorrow, because when thus, like Nazareth, they are put into an ill name, unthinking people are prejudiced against them, and are easily persuaded that no good thing can come out of them. There is a late reproach put upon our assemblies by the law, which makes it highly penal for one in any place of trust or power to be seen in them: and this reproach adds to our brethren; *Hear, O our God, for we are* suspected, *we are despised*, and both without cause; and this is our sorrow; we quarrel not with those who give us this hard treatment, we pray God to forgive them, but *as a sword in our bones* are these reproaches.

And now to have those taken away who were so much the glory of our assemblies, and helped to answer them who reproached us, and to put to silence their ignorance; to be stript of our ornaments now, of those whose good report of all men made them a credit to us, even our enemies themselves being judges, this is sorrow upon sorrow: for we know not what to say when we are asked, What will ye do now? where is your glory? but that, *our God* is still *our glory*, our *everlasting glory*.

(4.) The judgments of God that threaten our land, and the difficult trembling posture of the affairs of the protestant churches abroad, are our sorrow; it grieves us to see the desolations of the sanctuary, to hear the groans of God's Israel in Egypt; by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small, and his interests neglected? The enemies of the reformed churches are many and mighty, and violent against them; their friends few and feeble, and cool toward them. It is our sorrow that there are such heats and ferments among ourselves. We have reason to fear the desolations which a kingdom divided against itself is threatened with: we are biting and devouring one another, widening matters in difference, and exasperating one another's spirits; *firebrands, arrows, and death* are thrown about, and discord, among other tares, sown in God's field; all who wish well to the honour of Christ, and the interests of his kingdom among men, grieve to see it.

And is it not then sorrow upon sorrow, at this time to have one removed from us who was and would have been a peace-maker with God by his prayers, who stood in the gap as an intercessor, to turn away his wrath, who had an interest in heaven, and improved it for a sinful people, who was and would have been a peace-maker with men too, by his Christian temper and moderation, who studied the things which make for peace, who placed his religion in the essentials of it, and there spent his zeal? Now the dividing spirit so much prevails, it is sad to lose one who was of such a healing spirit. Now so many are ...ing oil to our flames, which is our sorrow, it is upon sorrow to see the hand withered that was bringing water to them, and the earthen vessel broken that held that water. It is ill with the patient, if, when his disease is at the height, those physicians are removed who best understood his case, and the method of his cure.

Let us now make some application of this:

1. See what this world is; it is a *vale of tears*, it is a *Bochim*, a place of *weepers*, and we must expect no other but a sorrowful passage through it. It is well if in Christ we have peace and joy; in the world we must have trouble and grief. In the upper world there is a perfect and perpetual serenity, it is all clear and calm there; but in these lower regions the clouds are still returning after the rain, and we must expect sorrow upon sorrow. Look which way we will, and we see the tears of the oppressed, some upon one account, and some upon another, and many times they have no comforter. We see families in tears, congregations in tears, churches, nations in tears. How melancholy is the state of human life! What a constant series of griefs are we attended with through this wilderness! The end of one trouble is commonly the beginning of another, *Deep calls unto deep*. Nay, troubles often come in company, and the beginning of one is the preface to another; and we are not to think it strange, it is what others have had experience of, and we have had notice of.

The larger our acquaintance is, and the more friends we have, the more happy we think ourselves, and we have cause to do so; what greater pleasure or comfort is there on earth, than an agreeable friendship? And yet the more we have of this comfort, the more sorrow we are exposed to; the more dear friends we have, the more we have to sympathize with, and the more we have to part with; if it adds something to our pleasure that we rejoice with those we love when they rejoice, it adds more to our pain, that by the same rule we weep with them when they weep; but considering how many more men's griefs are than their joys in this world, and that in both we must be partakers with our friends, we must conclude that by the increase of our friendships, our joys rise not in proportion to our griefs, unless that we conceive a secret pleasure in contributing something toward the comfort of our afflicted friends and their families, by our sincere and affectionate sympathy with them.

And is this world so full of sorrows, *sorrows upon sorrows?* We see it is. What is there in it then that should court either our love to it or our stay in it? Why should our affections be set upon good things beneath, when we see them liable to so many sorrowful changes? Why should they not be set upon good things above, which though they may perhaps admit of an endless increase, yet know no change, nor are in any danger of being lost? Why should we be fond of a continuance here, where the longer we stay the more sorrows we shall have to share in, and not

rather covet to remove to that world, whence sorrow is for ever banished, where all tears shall be wiped away from our eyes, and joy upon joy shall draw out the bliss parallel to the line of eternity itself.

2. Let one sorrow help to make another sorrow that comes with it the more tolerable, and to prepare and fit us for another that may come after it. As the more we do for God, the more we may do, one duty will fit us for another; so the more we bear from God, the more we may bear, and the better we may bear it, for *tribulation works patience*. Those who have not known sorrow, find it hard to be reconciled to it, and are apt to fret at it, and to double it by struggling with it; but those who have experienced sorrow upon sorrow, like their Master, who was a *man of sorrows, and acquainted* with grief, can converse familiarly with their afflictions, whereby not only the terror of them is taken off, but abundance of advantage is gained by them.

Let the frequent returns of our sorrows keep us from security, and keep up in us a lively expectation of trouble, that, let it come ever so suddenly, it may be no surprise to us. We must never say, surely this trouble will excuse us from another, or that now we have had our share; no, it is still less than what we deserve, and perhaps less than what we need. We should rather argue, Have I had this sorrow? what good use shall I make of it, that by it I may be the better prepared for the next? If our sorrows wean us from the world, and loosen our hearts from it; if they make us serious and thoughtful of another world; if they endear Christ to us, and make him more precious, by giving us an experimental acquaintance with the powers and pleasures of his grace; then when sorrow comes upon sorrow we may bear them cheerfully. *Patience works experience*, and *experience* a *hope* that *makes not ashamed*.

And if we thus improve our sorrows, though as to the troubles themselves of this present time, we must remember that we are but girding on the harness, and must not boast as though the warfare were accomplished, and we had put it off; yet as to any real hurt or injury that the troubles can do us, we may boast as though we had put off the harness, for in all these things, not only we shall be, but we are already, more than conquerors through him who loved us and died for us.

3. When God pursues one sorrow with another, let us follow the sorrow for affliction with a godly sorrow for sin, and that is a sorrow upon sorrow which will be an evidence for us that the affliction comes from love, is designed for our good, and does us the good that is designed us; and will prepare us for such a deliverance out of our affliction, as will be a mercy indeed to us.

When we sorrow for the death of our friends, particularly of our ministers, we should at the same time sorrow for our sins, by which we have provoked God thus to contend with us. We are therefore deprived of the comfort of our relations, because we have not done the duty of them; when, therefore, we lament the effect, we should lament the cause.

4. When we have sorrow upon sorrow upon the account of affliction, let us not by our own folly add any more sorrow to it; nor by the productions of the root of bitterness in our hearts, make the bitter cup to be more bitter to us than really it is. If, in any distress, we trespass yet more against the Lord, as that king Ahaz did, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. we make the distress more than double. *Sin upon sorrow* will be worse than *sorrow upon sorrow*, and will be wormwood and gall in the affliction and misery.

Now you here have sorrow for the death of your minister. If you should grow cool to holy ordinances, as if your religion were buried with your minister, or as if no other minister could teach you, and show you the way to Christ and heaven now he is gone; if this should be made use of as a pretence for your carelessness and lukewarmness in the service of God, that you have not the minister you have been used to, and so your hearts be hardened by the providence that should soften them, then it will indeed be sorrow upon sorrow. But I hope better things of you, my brethren, and that we shall yet have joy concerning you; that as those who have been so well taught, and so long under the inspection of such an overseer, you will continue your zeal in religion, and your love and unity among yourselves, and we may *hear of your affairs*, that *your conversation is as becomes the gospel*, and that *ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel*.

5. Let us study to answer God's end in visiting us thus with sorrow upon sorrow, and accommodate ourselves to the intentions of these providences. By the sadness of our countenances on such occasions as these let our hearts be made better, every way better. Every rod has a voice, which we are concerned to hear, and understand the meaning of; every affliction is sent upon an errand, and he who sends the errand expects to have an answer. What answer will you return this day to this messenger? or rather, to God's call by it.

This sorrow is appointed us, this sorrow upon sorrow, to put us upon considering the uncertainty of the continuance of our opportunities; *Yet a little while is the light with you;* places have their time for enjoying the gospel, which will come to an end, and then other places have their turn. Ministers are burning and shining lights, but it is only for a season that we rejoice in their light; which is a good reason why we should walk and work while we have the light, while it is yet called to-day, because the night comes, and before the night comes, wherein no man can work.

It is designed to bring us off from looking at men, and instruments, as though by their own power they could do us service, or had done it; no, they are only the earthen vessels in which the treasure was deposited, and they are broke and thrown aside, to give us a sensible conviction, that the excellency of the power is of God, and not of them. We are thus taught to cease from man, from wise and good and useful men, whose breath at their best state is in their nostrils, and will not be there long. Let our dependence therefore be not on them, but on Christ, who makes them that to us that they are; let us sit down with delight under the shadow, not of these gourds, that come up in a night, and perish in a night, but of that Rock of Ages that abides for ever. Let us not bind up our religion, and the comfort of it, in our ministers; for God therefore shows us the end of their conversation among us, that we may cleave so much the closer to Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and will be the same to the successors in the ministry, that he was to their predecessors, and make them the same to us, if it be not our own fault.

6. Let us be earnest with God in prayer that he would not proceed in his controversy with us, and that we may not have any more sorrow upon sorrow of this kind. Go forth to meet the Lord in the way of his judgments, and humble yourselves under his mighty hand, and pray and seek his face. He expects his praying people should now appear in the breach, to turn away his wrath, and justly *wonders* if at such a time there be *no intercessor;* and shall not each of us then be intercessors, as the prophet Ezekiel was when he fell upon his face, and cried with a loud voice, as one in earnest, *Ah, Lord God, wilt thou make a full end of the remnant of Israel?* And as the prophet Amos was, when he prayed, *O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee; by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small.*

O that by this providence we might be stirred up to pray more, and pray better, to pray more earnestly, as Christ himself did when he was in his agony. When we have lost a praying friend, we are concerned the more to pray for ourselves. Pray that the light of God's countenance may shine upon us through these dark dispensations, and that whatever friends and helpers he takes away from us, he would not himself turn away from us, nor take away his mercy and his truth.

7. Even when we have sorrow upon sorrow, yet let us not sorrow as those who have no hope; but take hold of the comforts and encouragements which God hath provided for his own people, in their multiplied and most aggravated sorrows, that they may not be unmixed sorrows, and unallayed. As the righteous have hope in their death, so have their friends also who are left behind in tears.

(1.) We have hope concerning him whom we have lost, that he is removed unspeakably to his own advantage, for to those to whom to live is Christ, to die is not only no loss, but great gain. This country has a mighty loss of him, but he has no loss of it, who is gone to the better country, that is, the heavenly, to better work, and better pleasures, and better friends. Those are safely and honourably lodged who are received into the mansions in our Father's house, those everlasting habitations; those have a good repose, and sleep sweetly, who sleep in Jesus. What honours here are comparable to theirs, to whom our Lord Jesus says, *Well done, good and faithful servant;* or what pleasure comparable to theirs who *enter into the joy of their Lord.* Let this yield us pleasing thoughts when we are afflicting ourselves for the loss of one we loved. We sorrow for the body, that that is lodged in a land of darkness and silence; but the soul is the man, and that is gone thither where its eyes are opened to an everlasting light, and its lips opened in songs of everlasting praise; and therefore if we loved him we would rejoice. He who so often complained of knowing but in part, and prophesying but in part, is now made perfect, and sees face to face.

(2.) We have hopes that God will do our souls good by this providence, that he will sanctify it to us, and make it a means of our sanctification; and that the impressions of it will not be soon lost, will never be quite lost. You of this place and neighbourhood will, I hope, be quickened hereby to consider your latter end, and with the utmost diligence to prepare for it. You see, that in the midst of life we are in death, and that we are often obliged to remove hence upon very short warning. When you saw your minister last in the pulpit, and heard him discourse so excellently of the intercession of Christ, you little thought it was the last sermon you should hear him preach, and that within a few days you should see him laid in the dust; but so it proves; and God by it calls aloud to you, *Therefore be ye also ready,* be ye always ready, for you see that *at such an hour as you think not, the Son of man comes.*

And as this providence will I hope, through grace, do you good, by quickening you to prepare for death, so I hope it may be of use to you, to help you above the fear of death: those who are ready to die should be willing to die, and they have the more reason to be so, when they see their friends go cheerfully before them down into the darksome valley of the shadow of death, and even then fear no evil. Your ministers who, while they lived, showed you the way to heaven through the paths of life, when they die show you the way thither through the regions of death, and go before you through that Jordan, as the priests did before Israel bearing the ark of the covenant. Be ye, therefore, followers of them, who are now *through faith and patience inheriting the promises.*

(3.) We have hope, that God will take care of the beheaded family, that is most sensibly touched by this breach. He was one who blessed his household, that was every way a blessing to it, and therefore his death is killing to it, we sorrow with them, and grieve for their loss; but we depend upon the word of God, that he will be a Husband to the widow, and a Father to the fatherless children; *Jehovah-jireh—The Lord will provide;* and *in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen*, Gen. xxii. 14.; the orphans who are left with him, shall not be left by him, nor left comfortless, but he will come unto them, and take care of them; and let the widow trust in him, and she shall not be made ashamed of her hope. To the aged mother likewise, who has lived to see sorrow upon sorrow, God will be better than ten sons, than ten such sons.

(4.) We have hope, that God will provide well for the congregation, and that that shall not be destitute and dispersed, as sheep having no shepherd, but they and theirs shall still be led into the green pastures, and fed beside the still waters. You have been loving and respectful to your minister, and many of you have been his comfort and hope, and I trust will be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord; and you have reason to expect that God will send you another faithful guide in the good ways of the Lord. I have reason to think he has a blessing in reserve for you, by which he will carry on his good work among you. St. Paul, when he was in prison, comforted himself with this, that though he was bound, the word of the Lord was not bound, and when faithful ministers are laid in their graves, this may be our comfort, though they are buried the word of the Lord is not buried. When you change your minister, you do not change your Master; you shall have another preacher, but thanks be to God, not another Bible, or another gospel.

(5.) We have hope, that though we have parted with a dear friend in sorrow, with many such in sorrow upon sorrow, yet the day is coming when we shall meet again, shall meet with them all again in joy, in everlasting joy. The hope of this gives the strongest allay to our griefs. *If in this life only we had hope in Christ*, and were to fetch our reliefs in such cases as these, from within the confines of time, *we were of all men the most miserable;* but we have hope in Christ, that those who now sleep in him, he will shortly bring with him; and will bring us to meet them; we who remain and are left behind for a while, shall be brought to be companions with them in the kingdom, as we have been in the patience and tribulation, of Jesus Christ. We *look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come*, and in the believing expectation thereof we comfort ourselves and one another.

Now God calls to weeping and mourning, it is a comfort to us to see so many sad countenances and wet eyes in this solemn assembly, for thus we answer God's calls; but when God calls us to joy, into his joy, what a pleasant sight will it be to see the *general assembly and church of the first-born*, and ourselves in it, and not one weeping eye, or dejected countenance, or sorrowful spirit, among all the holy myriads. There shall be no sorrow, nor any occasion for it; nay, there shall be everlasting joy, and everlasting cause for it; the streams ever running, because their springs ever full and overflowing.

Our assembly is now breaking up and scattering, and it is not likely that we should ever be all together again in this world; but this is our comfort, if we be found the faithful followers of the Lord Jesus, we shall shortly be gathered together unto him, with all the saints, and none but saints, and saints made perfect: and that assembly shall never be broken up or scattered; we shall meet and part no more. The best we can here hope for is, to go in and out with the sheep of Christ, and to find pasture; but if we can but get to heaven, we shall be pillars in the temple of our God, and shall go no more out. The Lord bring us all safe thither in due time; and in the mean time the Lord watch over us, *The Lord watch between us, when we are absent the one from the other*, Gen. xxxi. 42.

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# A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF THE

# LIFE OF MR. SAMUEL LAWRENCE.

He was born in *Wem*, a little market-town in Shropshire, and, as appears by the register, was baptized Nov. 5, 1661. He was the only son of Mr. William Lawrence, and Sarah his wife. His good mother is still living. His father was a very eminent Christian, and much respected and valued by all good people who knew him. My father preached his funeral sermon at Wem, Feb. 26, 1694-5, on Luke xxiii. 28.

*Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.* Whence he showed, that when a good man dies, there is no reason we should weep for him, but there is reason we should weep for ourselves. Certainly (said he) this was a good man, and is manifest in the consciences of you all, and of all who knew him, that he was so; *Weep not for him* therefore, for his death is an outlet to all the evils of this world, and an inlet to all the happiness of the other world.

Looking over my father's notes of that sermon upon this occasion, it has so affected me, that I must beg the reader's pardon, if I insert the heads of it, the subject being so near a-kin (though I little thought of it) to mine at the son's funeral.

"It is said of Abel, that *being dead he yet speaketh.* If our deceased friend and brother who is dead could be heard speaking, this is what he would say, My dear wife and children, my dear brothers and sisters, and other relations, my dear neighbours and friends, *weep not for me*, for you have something else to do with your tears, bestow them where they will turn to a better account, weep for yourselves. But why not for thee, dear husband, father, brother, friend? why not for thee? Did we not love thee? You did, and for that very reason, *weep not for me.*

"I. For, consider the evils I am freed from. I had a sickly crazy body, especially toward my latter end, wearisome days and nights were appointed to me; what would I have given many a time for an hour's rest; but now all this is at an end; I shall be no more sick, no more pained, my head shall now ache no more. And are you sorry for this?

"I had my share also of losses and crosses in my worldly affairs; I had one house burned over my head, and almost all that was in it, in a few minutes, and have had the care and trouble of building and furnishing another; but now farewell all such cares. And are you sorry for this?

"You know, that as long as I was able, I was laborious in my particular calling, I never ate the bread of idleness, but of honest diligence; but now all that toil is over, I am got to bed, where I rest from my labours, from all my labours of that kind, never to return to them again. And will you grieve for this?

"A great deal of pains I have taken in travelling and attending upon holy ordinances, on sabbath days, on week days, sometimes above and beyond strength; but I am now where I have communion with God at the spring-head, without the conduit-pipes of ordinances. And will you grieve for this?

"You, all of you have, and I doubt not but some of you feel, a body of death; I am sure I did, and many a time it made me cry out, *O wretched man that I am!* You know what I mean, the corrupt nature, the carnal mind, the sin that dwells in us, a proneness to evil, a backwardness to good; but death has eased me of that burthen, when the breath went out of the body, that indwelling sin went out of the soul; when the house was pulled down, there was an end of the leprosy that was in the walls: what all the praying and hearing, the sabbaths and sacraments, the care and watchfulness, of forty years would not do, death has done at one blow. *Weep not for me* then.

"I had daily grief in my heart for my own sins, for the sins of others, and for the afflictions of my friends, and for the troubles of the church of God. but now all tears, even those of godly sorrow, are wiped away from mine eyes; therefore let none be in yours upon my account.

"And lastly, the bitterness of death is past with me; I have shot the gulf, that last enemy, that son of Anak, is vanquished, and I am triumphing. *O Death, where is thy sting!* And therefore, *weep not for me.*

"II. But this is not all; if you consider the happiness I am entered into, that fair palace in which death was but a dark entry, you would not weep for me, but rejoice rather.

"Would you know where I am? I am at home in my Father's house, in the mansion prepared for me there. I am where I would be, where I have long and often desired to be; no longer on a stormy sea, but in a safe and quiet harbour. My working time is done, and I am resting; my sowing time is done, and I am reaping; my joy is as the joy of harvest.

"Would you know how it is with me? I am made perfect in holiness; grace is swallowed up in glory; the top-stone of the building is brought forth.

"Would you know what I am doing? I see God, I see him as he is, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face; and the sight is transforming, it makes me like him. I am in the sweet enjoyment of my blessed Redeemer, my Head and Husband, whom my soul loved, and for whose sake I was willing to part with all; I am here bathing myself at the spring-head of heavenly pleasures and joys unutterable, and therefore weep not for me. I am here keeping a perpetual sabbath; what that is, judge by your short sabbaths; I am here singing Hallelujahs incessantly to him who sits upon the throne, and rest not day or night from praising him.

"Would you know what company I have? Blessed company, better than the best on earth; here are holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect; I am set down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, with blessed Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, and all the saints; and here I meet with many of my old acquaintance, that I fasted and prayed with, who got before me hither.

"And, lastly, will you consider how long this is to continue; it is a garland that never withers; a

rown of glory that fades not away; after millions f millions of ages, it will be as fresh as it is now; nd therefore weep not for me.

" It is true, the body must turn to rottenness and utrefaction, the worms must feed sweetly upon it; ut that also sleeps in Jesus, it still remains united o him, and shall shortly be raised again incorruptble, like the glorious body of Jesus Christ, more lorious than the noon-day sun.

" But though you have no reason to weep for him ho is gone, you have abundant reason to weep for ourselves and for your children.

Weep for your sins, the cause of this and all your ther griefs; that is the right channel for your tears o run in. O that I knew what to say, to make sin itter to you this day! Shall I tell you it kills your friends; it killed your Saviour; it threatens to kill your souls.

" Weep for your loss, the loss of a godly neighbour; a good member of your society, a praying member, and a profitable one; every way useful among you. I cannot say, he loved your nation, and built you a synagogue; but he found you one when you needed one; his house was your synagogue, his doors, his heart, were open to you.

" Weep for your children who are coming into a tempting troublesome world, and going abroad into it; weep for yourselves, who are yet in the midst of it, cumbered, tempted, absent from the Lord.

" Weep for the evil to come upon yourselves and your children, which the taking away of such men is a threatening omen of.

" But is there not something else to be done besides weeping? There is: we must acknowledge the hand of God in the removal of such men; must be thankful to God that we had them so long; must search, and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord; weep and pray for ourselves and our children; weep and prepare to follow; weep and hope; and if thus we sow in tears, we shall shortly reap in joy, everlasting joy."

These were the heads of what my father enlarged upon in that sermon; and the reading of it affected me the more, because it was but the year after that it became applicable to himself; and Mr. Tallents, when he preached my father's funeral sermon, made mention of Mr. William Lawrence's death, and spoke very respectfully of him.

But to return to our subject, from which we too soon digressed; his father's elder brother was Mr. Edward Lawrence, an eminent minister in Shropshire first, and afterwards in London. A man of great integrity, and a substantial judicious preacher; who, to keep the peace of his conscience, left a good living, and threw himself, and his numerous family, upon divine Providence.

His book called *Christ's power over bodily diseases*, has been and will be of great use to many for their comfort in sickness, and their improvement of it. This nephew of his in many things resembled him much, and the comfort he had in him was the more valued by him, because of the great grief he had in some of his own children, which he let the world know something of in a book he published, called *Parents' Groans over Wicked Children*. He died in November, 1695.

Having given this account of his family and relations, we come next to give some account of his childhood and youth, as we have it from those who then knew him. He was betimes inclined to learning, and was very mindless of the sports and toys that children usually are addicted to. When he was very little, his parents sent him to school, more to be out of the way of danger, than in expectation he would learn any thing; but before they were aware he had learned his letters, and by the year's end could read very well in his Bible. So intent was he upon his book, that his parents would hire him to play for a while, but he would presently return to his book.

Much sooner than most children do, he entered upon his learning of the Latin tongue, at the Free School in Wem, under Mr. Roderick and his two ushers, at a time when that school flourished much. There he made such proficiency when he was very young, and advanced so fast, that his masters loved him, and others admired him. The time that most of his school-fellows spent in play, he spent in reading; and was so earnest in pursuing learning, and so careful to perform the exercises of the school, that he would scarce allow time to dress himself.

His master, Mr. Roderick, removing, and another coming in his place, who did not take so much pains, our young scholar complained to his parents, that he was not forwarded in learning as he had been, and therefore desired he might be removed to Newport, where there was at that time a flourishing school under Mr. Edwards; and he was so, and there improved very much in his learning.

His inclinations to piety were as early as his inclinations to learning; and he was not only free from the common follies and vanities of childhood and youth, but was forward to the exercises of devotion. He began betimes to pray in secret, and would be up early to redeem time for it. So much seriousness and conscientiousness appeared in him in his childhood, that some who knew him then would say, they thought he was sanctified from the womb.

After he had got what learning was to be got at Newport school, he spent some time under the inspection of my father at Broad Oak, and some with Mr. Tallents at Shrewsbury; and a considerable time he spent with some other hopeful young men under Mr. Malden at Alkinton near Whitchurch, where he improved himself very much in Greek and

Hebrew. He continued there till Mr. Malden's death, in June, 1681.

Soon after that he was sent up to London, where, after some little time spent with his uncle, he was put under the tuition of that famous instructor of youth, Mr. Charles Moreton, whose private academy at Newington Green flourished very much at that time, and was a nursery of many who have since done worthily, and been famous in their generation. There he went through a course of university learning, and carried himself so as to gain the respects of all who observed him.

There he staid till the iniquity of the times forced Mr. Moreton to break up his academy, and to remove himself for safety and liberty to New England, as many such men were necessitated to do in the last age.

When he left Mr. Moreton, he was recommended to Mr. Singleton, to be assistant to him in teaching a grammar school in Clerkenwell Close, and was very acceptable both to him, and to the relations of the young gentlemen who were his scholars.

After he had spent two or three years there, he was recommended to the Lady Irby, relict of Sir Anthony Irby, who lived in Dean's Yard in Westminster, to be her domestic chaplain. When she first saw him, he was so young, and looked so much younger than he was, that she asked, "What! have they sent me a child for my chaplain?" But upon trial she soon found he was no child in understanding. A great deal of love and respect he gained by his prudent and pious carriage in that family. Upon his first coming thither, when some of his friends spoke with concern for him, how he would have courage, being young and modest, to go through his work, and were afraid he would be dashed, when, as often, there were persons of quality present at their family worship; he said it did not at all affect him, for "I have a greater presence to mind than theirs."

While he was at my Lady Irby's, the liberty for dissenters commenced in 1687, and a door of opportunity was opened to them just twenty-five years after it was shut by the Act of Uniformity; and soon after the opening of it was legally confirmed upon the revolution. And it has been kept open twenty-five years, and blessed be God, no man has been able to shut it. Upon the setting up of the meetings publicly then, Mr. Lawrence began to preach, and frequently assisted Mr. Alsop, on sacrament days, and upon other occasions, his meeting lying very near to my Lady's; and his first performances in that work were very acceptable.

One thing I must here take notice of to his honour; (and it is the more so, that notwithstanding my great intimacy with him at London at that time, I do not remember ever to have known it till now, that I am acquainted with it by his surviving relations;) his father had his house and goods burnt in that dreadful fire which consumed the whole town of Wem, in March 1676-7. The rebuilding and refurnishing of it was a great expense to him; notwithstanding which he brought up his son to learning, which the son had such a grateful sense of, that as soon as ever he came into a capacity of maintaining himself, and with a frugal management of sparing something, all he could spare before he married, he sent to his father, amounting at times to a very considerable sum. He was one who had learned, according to the apostle's rule, *to show piety at home*, and to *requite his parents*. Those who knew him well, have said they wanted words to express his respect to his parents and love to his relations.

In the year 1688 he came down into the country to see his relations, and a society of dissenters in and about Nantwich in Cheshire being then in quest of a minister, after several motions made to them had miscarried, desired Mr. Lawrence to come and spend a Lord's day with them, which he did to their great and universal satisfaction; so that they unanimously chose him to be their minister; and after some time taken to consider of it, and consult his friends, he accepted it; but went first to London to take leave of his friends there. The Lady Irby was extremely loth to part with her chaplain, and was very angry with Mr. Baxter and my father for persuading him to go to Nantwich. But thither he came in September that year. In the beginning of November following he was publicly ordained to the ministry by a class of Lancashire ministers at Warrington; six more were ordained at the same time. Mr. Crompton preached, and Mr. Risely gave the exhortation. I remember the time by a good token, for when we were at Warrington, we received the news of the Prince of Orange's landing.

He is now settled at Nantwich, and some there will remember what manner of entering in he had among them; with what wisdom, industry, and zeal, he applied himself to his work, and how many precious souls he was instrumental of good to; what a free course the word of the Lord had there, and how it was glorified. His greatest encouragement there was at first; but he continued there to his death. Though if he had had bodily strength, and a voice proportionable to his other ministerial abilities, his friends would have removed him into a larger sphere of usefulness.

He preached constantly twice every Lord's day, winter and summer, and read and expounded the Scriptures in order both parts of the day, the Old Testament in the morning, and the New in the afternoon; and catechised the children every Lord's day, winter and summer, except sacrament days.

He constantly administered the Lord's supper once a month with great solemnity and seriousness. The young people who were admitted to

hat ordinance, did, before the congregation, renew heir baptismal covenant in that form which my ather drew up, which is in his Life, "I take God the 'ather to be my chief good and highest end; I ake God the Son to be my Prince and Saviour; 3od the Holy Ghost to be my sanctifier, teacher, uide, and comforter. I take the word of God to be ny rule in all my actions; and the people of God o be my people in all conditions. I do also give, levote, and dedicate my whole to God, all I am, all have, and all I can do. And this I do deliberately, incerely, freely, and for ever." And some he afterards advised to write it over, and subscribe their ames to it; which he said he would keep as a witness against them if they proved false to it. He ived to admit many to the Lord's Supper, whom he ad himself baptized in their infancy.

He preached every Saturday about noon; it is he market-day; and so he gave an opportunity to he country people of spending an hour for their ouls in the midst of their worldly business.

In baptizing children, he generally received the child from the parent's own hand, and returned it to him again, with a solemn charge to bring it up in the fear of God, and the faith of Christ; and frequently took occasion to declare, that he did not baptize into a party, but into the church of Christ.

He spent some time with the communicants on the Friday before every sacrament, to assist them in their preparation for that solemn ordinance; and was very ready to visit the sick and afflicted, and to assist the families of his friends in accommodating themselves to the providences of God that were concerning them.

He was a very solid, serious, judicious preacher; his discourses were generally short, but pithy and substantial, and well studied. His doctrine dropped as the dew, and distilled as the small rain; and he preached as one who truly aimed at the edification of those who heard him, and was in care to make them wiser and better.

When he began his ministry at Nantwich, that he might preach the more profitably, he resolved to preach in a method, that his hearers might see divine truths in their order and connexion with each other; he therefore entered upon a body of divinity, and preached it over largely, which took him up many years; when he had finished that, he preached over most, if not all, of our Saviour's parables; after that, went over many practical subjects, as the mortification of sin, living by faith, &c. And toward the latter end of his time, when most of those were dead who were his hearers when he first came, and many young ones were grown up, he began to preach over a body of divinity a second time; but studied every sermon anew; nay, not so much as looking on his old notes, saying, he would not have his Master find him idle. He was in great care not to flag and grow remiss in his public performances; and would desire some of his hearers who were judicious, to tell him if they observed any alteration for the worse in them.

He was one who loved his work, and his heart was in it. He was forward to embrace all opportunity of doing good. He frequently preached lectures on week days in the country about; and funeral sermons many times gratis. He often preached when he laboured under bodily indispositions, which made the work very difficult, but would have served many a one for an excuse from it. When some advised him to consider his strength, and forbear preaching, he said, "I will use what strength I have in my Master's work, and do not desire to live a day longer than I may do him some service." It is not remembered that of all the time of his being at Nantwich, which was near twenty-four years, he was ever taken off from his work till the last sabbath of his life, by the sickness of which he died; and then, when he was so weak that he could scarce be helped out of his bed, he said he hoped, through the goodness of God, he should be able to do his work the next sabbath, for, said he, "it is my delight;" but before that sabbath came, he was removed to better work.

Though he was thus diligent in all the parts of his work, yet he was so far from glorying in it, that he sometimes expressed himself thus: "O what reason have I to be humbled, that so much of my time runs waste, which I can give but little account of; and that I do no more in the service of God; but it is a comfort to me, that I do any thing."

Once being much fatigued with his work upon a Lord's day, he lamentably said to those about him, "O how poorly do we serve and praise God, but it is a pleasure to think that we shall shortly do it better in heaven."

He was much concerned for the success of his ministry; and sometimes was dejected and cast down, because he saw not people so much affected with it, and wrought upon by it, as he thought they had been formerly, though it was observed, that toward the latter end of his ministry he grew rather more lively and affectionate in his performances.

The irregular walking of any of his hearers was a great grief to him, and went near his heart, and he would often sadly lament it in public, that the lives of many who are called Christians, are such a reproach to that worthy name by which they are called, and that the professors of this day came so far short of the strictness and seriousness of those he had formerly known.

He was faithful to those under his charge in giving private admonitions as there was occasion. He had an excellent faculty of giving reproof with authority and gravity, and yet with meekness and humility. He flattered none in any thing that was amiss, but where he thought it proper, freely told people of their faults,

but therein governed himself according to the rule of that scripture, which I remember he preached an excellent sermon upon above twenty years ago, at a meeting of the Cheshire ministers, (2 Tim. ii. 24.) *The servants of the Lord must not strive.*

The tendency of his preaching was to bring people to Christ and heaven; to heaven as their end, and to Christ as their way. He said to one of the lambs of his flock, "Well, I hope you learn Christ; I preach Christ as plainly and well as I can." He used this argument to persuade people to lay up their treasure in heaven, "If our treasure be on earth we are going from it, if it be in heaven we are going to it."

He discharged his duty as the master of a family conscientiously and well; where he had a tent, God had an altar, on which the morning and evening lamb were duly offered; and with the burning of the incense in prayer and praise, the lamps were lighted in the reading and expounding of the Scriptures; he was also constant in singing psalms with his family. The sermons he preached in public were repeated in his family, and a great deal of pains he took to teach his children and his household the way of the Lord, and to make religion and the service of God pleasant to them.

His whole conversation in the world was blameless, and harmless, and without rebuke, and like Demetrius, he had a *good report of all men, and of the truth itself.* He was of a peaceable spirit, bearing and forgiving; and if sometimes a provocation ruffled him a little, he soon recovered himself with such a thought as this, "What have we grace for, but to enable us to practise those duties which are most cross to flesh and blood."

He was a very good scholar, and very communicative of his knowledge, and delighted even from his youth in that communication which was good, and to the use of edifying. He was one of those wise men, who not only lay up knowledge, but use it aright, and whose lips feed many. He had a peculiar dexterity, which I have often admired in him, and been ready to envy him, in drawing on discourse with young scholars, that he might have opportunity of giving them instruction, which was always pertinent, and without affectation.

The year before he died he was providentially drawn in, as I may say, (partly by having a son of his own at home with him, after he had been some time at Glasgow, and partly to gratify two or three other very hopeful young men, who came and tabled near him in the town, for the benefit of his conversation,) to read university learning, both philology and philosophy, and he not only took great delight in it, but made it to appear, as did the proficiency of those he read to, that he was well qualified for it, as I always thought him to be. And this made his death to be sorrow upon sorrow, that we lost one who was not only an excellent minister himself, but was just then beginning to be useful in training up ministers; and what he did he did gratis.

He constantly attended the meetings of the Cheshire ministers twice a year, and was much beloved and respected by them; was often chosen moderator, and his advice in any matter hearkened to as much as any one's.

In his non-conformity, he was considerate and conscientious; he was so far from being determined to it by custom and education, and from being prejudiced in its favour, that if he could have been satisfied with the lawfulness of conformity, he would gladly have conformed; and he was tempted to it by some good preferment offered him in the church, which would have been more than double or treble to his temporal advantage. He studied the point with the greatest impartiality imaginable, but he could not conform without wronging his conscience, and therefore chose rather to suffer than to sin. But in his nonconformity he always expressed himself with great moderation, and a truly Christian temper, and was very careful to preserve his hearers from heat and bigotry, and to possess them with principles of catholic charity.

He was much confirmed in his nonconformity by the late act against occasional conformity; and though he did not use to meddle with such things in the pulpit, yet upon occasion of that act, preaching then in course of Christ's kingly office, he said, "That was it which the dissenters were bearing their testimony to." And so it is; for they believe, that though the church has a judicial power to see that the institutions of Christ be observed, and kept pure and entire, like the power of the judges and justices in the state, yet a legislative power to decree rites and ceremonies, like that of the sovereign and parliament in the state, is the prerogative of our Lord Jesus; and that no man, or company of men, in the world has any such power.

It was but the day before he fell ill of his last sickness, that he happened in discourse to fall upon the question of nonconformity, and he expressed his admiration and lamentation, (as the learned Dr. Whitby does in his Protestant Reconciler, which he referred to,) that the peace of the church should be broken by the imposition of that which the imposers themselves acknowledge not to be necessary, nor required by Christ or his apostles; and that the imposition should be continued with an inflexible resolution not to part with those indifferent things, which they cannot but own they might lawfully do, when it would put an end to that which they call a damnable schism, and so (in their judgment) prevent the everlasting ruin of thousands; "surely," says he, "never were precious souls so undervalued."

Thus he stood fast in the Christian liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and witnessed against

mpositions in the things of God, though his con-tancy herein was much to the prejudice of his secu-ar interest, and he would sometimes say, " If our cause be not just and good, surely we are the great-est fools in the world." But yet, in the things that are Cæsar's, no man pressed more the duty of sub-jects to the powers that God has set over them. He usually observed the 8th of March, the day of the Queen's accession to the crown, and took that occasion to preach of the mercy of government, and particularly of the government we are under, and to press people under it to live quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.

The afflictions he met with he was careful to get good by; they are sent (so he wrote to a friend on occasion of a pressing trouble he was under) to soften a hard heart, to humble for sin, the procuring cause of them, to quicken us in our duty, to show us the vanity of the world, to remind us of our own death, and quicken us to prepare for it; if sanctified they are wholesome to us. O that these ends may be at-tained; that our griefs may have this kindly work upon us; that one affliction may fit us for another.

He lived in a lively apprehension of death ap-proaching; and kept up such a constant expectation of it, that sudden death was no surprise or terror to him. Nay, he sometimes pleased himself with this thought, that at death he should go to see and enjoy God, and to admire him in all his works of creation, providence, and especially redemption, which, said he, " I shall then see in the light of eternity."

Many other things worthy of notice might be said of him, but I shall here add nothing more, only that he finished well. Though he had no strong consti-tution at all, yet he enjoyed a good state of health for the most part. On the Lord's day, (April 13,) he preached on that branch of Christ's priestly office, *Seeing he ever lives making intercession;* and exerted himself with more than ordinary vigour and liveli-ness, so that some of his hearers took notice of it, and asked him, when he had done, how he bore that day's work, little thinking it was his last.

The Wednesday following he sickened of a fever, which at first did not seem at all threatening; on the Lord's day he said he hoped he should be able to preach by the next Lord's day. He had very good advice and assistance, but that night the dis-temper seized his head, and he was sometimes deli-rious; but when he spoke what was foreign and in-coherent, yet it showed that his heart was in heaven, for in his deliriums he would pray, and sometimes in Latin.

When he had his understanding, he said he had good hope through grace that he should go to hea-ven. And some of the last words he was heard to say were, " I do not fear, I do not fear." He died the 9th day of his fever, on Thursday, April 24, 1712, about ten at night, in the 51st year of his age. He was buried in the chancel of Nantwich church the Monday following, and was followed to his grave by a great many true mourners.

He left behind him a sorrowful widow, and three sons by his first wife, and two daughters by his second, and a dear and tender mother, in the 80th year of her age. And many good friends he left behind in a vale of tears, but is himself gone to a world of everlasting joy.

# A SERMON

## PREACHED AT HABERDASHERS' HALL, JULY 13, 1712,

ON OCCASION OF THE

# DEATH OF THE REV. RICHARD STRETTON, M. A.

## WITH A CONCISE ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

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2 CORINTHIANS viii. 16.

*But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.*

A THANKSGIVING text may seem very improper for a funeral sermon; especially for one who was so useful in his generation; who lived justly respected, and dies justly lamented. I confess it would have been very seasonable upon this occasion to call you, for God by this and other the like providences calls us all, calls us aloud, (whether we will hear, or whether we will forbear,) to weeping and to mourning; not for those who are gone to the regions of bliss and joy above, weep not for them, but for ourselves and for our children, that are left behind in these lower regions of sin and woe. Even when our Saviour said, with an air of triumph, *Now I am no more in the world*, he said with an air of tenderness, *But these are in the world;* to teach us, though not to envy those who have got the victory, yet to pity ourselves, and one another, who are yet in the conflict. And such an instance of stupidity it is, that God is justly and highly displeased at it, if when righteous and merciful men perish, and are taken away from our world, we do not consider it, and lay it to heart; for though it is a good to come in the other world that they remove to, a promised good, it is an evil to come in this world that they remove from, a threatened evil, in the apprehension of which it becomes us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. The removal of good men may be looked upon as an ill omen; when they are commanded off who stood in the gap, we have reason to fear the breaking in of a deluge of judgments upon us; and God hereby gives fair warning to a careless world, to prepare accordingly. We know what followed the calling of Lot out of Sodom, and of Noah into the ark.

But is it our duty in every thing to give thanks; whatever the will of God's providence is, this is the will of his precept in Christ Jesus concerning us; and it is such a duty as will well consist with all the instances of holy gracious mourning—even when we sorrow for sin, our own and others', yet we must rejoice in God, and have our heart disposed to his praises. That mourning is either not from a right principle, or exceeds due bounds, and is the sorrow of the world, that puts us out of tune for thanksgiving. When we are ever so much burthened with the sense of guilt, we ought to say, *But thanks be to God*, there is rest in Christ; when we mourn for our afflictions, we may say, *But thanks be to God*, we are out of hell; nay, and *thanks be to God* these afflictions are designed to further us in our way to heaven. The truth is, we never want matter for praise, if we did not want a heart; and our comfort in God would be more abundant, if we did abound more in thanksgiving to God. And, therefore, I hope you will not think this text at all unsuitable to this solemn occasion. Holy Job in his griefs blessed the name of the Lord, who had graciously given that which he had now taken away, Job i. 21. and who, even in taking away, he was sure neither did him any wrong, nor meant him any hurt. And our blessed Saviour, when he wept over the grave of Lazarus whom he loved, lifted up even his weeping eyes to heaven, and said, *Father, I thank thee*, John xi. 35, 41.

Upon such an occasion as this, the removal of good men and good ministers by death, such as while they lived were blessings to the world, and instru-

ments of good to us, we may find matter for praise and thanksgiving, upon the account both of their present happiness and their past usefulness.

1. We may look up, and give thanks to God for what they are. For those who sleep in Jesus, we have reason to sorrow not only not as those who have no hope, but as those who have much comfort and satisfaction, to be a balance and allay to the sorrow. We have lost a useful good man, you here have lost a faithful minister, I and many others have lost a faithful friend; but, thanks be to God, our loss is his gain, for so death is to them to whom to live is Christ, it is great gain, quick gain, everlasting gain; it is his blessedness, for so death is to them who die in the Lord. He rests from his labours, from the toil both of services and sufferings; with the body all its burthens are put off, and the soul has obtained its discharge from that work-house, from that prison-house, is set at liberty, is at peace, is at rest, and its business is no longer, as it was here, its labour. The best employments of the best souls, while they are here in the body, are their labours, like Adam's tilling the ground, after he had sinned, in the sweat of his face; but the employments of holy souls in their separate state, are, like Adam's dressing the garden in his innocent estate, which he did without labour, and with complete and constant pleasure. But that is not all; thanks be to God, he not only rests from his labours, but his works follow him; now he is freed from the toil of them, he receives the reward of them. They who work in the Lord's vineyard, and there bear the burthen and heat of the day, when the evening comes, not only retire to their repose, but receive their penny. Poor Job puts both together when he speaks of the servant's earnest desire, both of the shadow and of the reward of his work, Job vii. 2.

Look up therefore, and see with an eye of faith that joy of our Lord, that fulness of joy into which this good and faithful servant is now entered, that glory, that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, with which he is now crowned; and then you will see reason to rejoice with him, and to glory with him, and to say, *Thanks be to God*, who has given him the victory. If we loved him we would rejoice, and bless God for the happy exchange he has made, because he is gone to the Father; and as Christ said, *My Father is greater than I*, that is, my state with my Father will far excel my present state in glory, so we may say of him and others who have fought the good fight, and finished their course, it is better with them where they are than where they were.

It is more a matter of thanksgiving when the lives of good men, though still great blessings to others, yet are become, through the decays and infirmities of age, burthens to themselves, and their souls begin to grow weary of them; which was the case here. Though old age carries with it both dignity and opportunity, though the hoary head be a crown of glory, yet, even when it is found in the way of righteousness, the days are called *evil days*, and the years such as a man has little *pleasure in*. When the *light is darkened*, the *clouds return after the rain*, the *keepers of the house tremble*, and the *strong men bow themselves*; then to *put off the earthly house of this tabernacle*, when it is thus gone out of repair, and remove to the *building of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, is a blessed exchange: thanks be to God, that one we loved so well has made that exchange. You lately heard him groaning being burthened, but now he is triumphing in his release, now he is singing Hallelujahs to him who sits on the throne. You lately saw him even dragging the chain of life, compassed about with infirmities, and full of pains; but now he is eased, now he is comforted, now he is full of delights, and is made to drink of the river of divine pleasures. You lately saw him weak, and scarce able to set one foot before another, but now he is among those who mount up with wings like eagles, who run and are not weary, who walk and are not faint.

This is the more to be rejoiced in, because it is a satisfaction to the longings of a gracious soul; it is what it has often wished for, what it has been long waiting for; and the longer it has continued in the body, the more welcome will the release, the exchange, be. It has often looked through the lattice, and cried, *Why are his chariot wheels so long a coming?* How then does it triumph now, as that good man did, "He is come, he is come!" Canaan was a pleasant land indeed to those who had been forty years wandering in a wilderness. Though hope deferred, hope of heaven deferred, maketh the heart sick, yet when at length the desire comes, it is so much the more a tree of life. Now, thanks be to God, for the happy removal of our Christian friends from darkness to light, from sorrow to joy, from the remainders of sin to the perfection of holiness, from the toilsome and hazardous services of Christ's camp on earth, to the pleasant and glorious services of his court in heaven. And, especially, thanks be to God for the good hope we any of us have through grace that we shall be with them shortly, shall be for ever with them. And if we have this hope in us, let us purify ourselves as they are pure.

2. We may look back, and give thanks to God for what they were. And that is the matter of thanksgiving which the text leads us to, and which therefore I must enlarge upon.

When those who have been in their day and place useful to us, to others, to many, and serviceable to the glory of God, are removed, and we see the end of their conversation, one of the great duties required of us is to give thanks to God that ever we had such friends, that by his grace they were made blessings

to us, and that they were continued to us so long. This is a duty we are apt to forget, when God in his providence has made breaches upon our comforts, and to think that our sorrow for the death of our dear relations will be our excuse for the omission; whereas, if at such a time we would intermix thanksgivings for former mercies with our complaints of present losses, it would redound very much both to God's glory and to our own comfort.

We have now parted with one who faithfully served his generation according to the will of God, that in the sphere wherein divine providence had placed him was long a burning and shining light; of whom it might be said, as of Jehoiada, (who for this reason had honour done him at his death,) *that he had done good in Israel*, 2 Chron. xxiv. 16. Now, thanks be to God for him, and for all that good which God wrought in and by him.

But there is something more particular which I had an eye to in the choice of the text on this occasion: all who knew good Mr. Stretton, know this of him, that he was a very zealous active man to promote works of charity; that he was very liberal himself, and industrious to excite and engage the liberality of others; he was one who devised liberal things, and laid out himself in them, who had cases of compassion much at heart, relating both to the souls and bodies of men, and with pleasure took pains to get suitable relief for them. This was the grace, this the service, in which he was eminent, in which he excelled, and which made him a very great blessing to many. Now this is that for which Titus is here praised, that he was an active man among the Corinthians to press and promote a charitable collection and contribution, that now was going round among the churches of the Gentiles, for the relief of the poor saints in Judea; who were at this time great sufferers, both by the iniquity and in the calamity of their country: or rather, God is here praised, who made Titus instrumental in that good work among the Corinthians; as others were in other places.

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Now these two will very much consist together, the praising of Titus, and the praising of God for Titus. There is a debt of honour owing to those whom God makes use of as the instruments of his providence or grace in kindness to us or others; *Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.* St. Paul was far from giving flattering titles to any, and yet in this chapter he calls the brethren who were employed in this service, *The messengers*, the apostles, *of the churches, and the glory of Christ.* And often in his epistles he takes occasion to give a good character, and a good report, of those who had done well. If the good report Demetrius has, be founded in truth, St. John also is ready to bear record, and to attest it. But this must not intrench upon the honour due to God only; the praise must pass through the instruments to God, and in him all must centre, as the apostle here takes care it should; *Thanks be to God, which put this earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.*

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Observe, what service he did, was from a principle within, from something in his heart; there is the treasure, there is the fountain, whence the words and actions are fetched, or rather, flow; if that be well fixed, and well furnished, all is well done. What is said of the servants of men, is true of all the servants of Christ, when they do the will of God acceptably, when they do it from the heart, for then with good will they do service. It was St. Paul's comfort that he served God *with his spirit in the gospel of his Son.* Nor is any work of piety or charity properly a good work, unless it be a heart work; if I *give all my goods to feed the poor*, and have not *love* seated in my *heart*, it profits nothing.

It was a principle of care that actuated him in this service. The word Σπουδη signifies *a close application* and intention of mind to the business he was employed in, a concern to have it done well, fear lest there should be any mistake or miscarriage in it, diligence, industry, and expedition, in the prosecution of it. What Titus found to do for the glory of God, and the good of the souls of men, he did it with all his might, and made a business of it. We translate it an *earnest care*, his heart was upon, and he left no stone unturned to bring it to a good issue.

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Now in the care, the earnest care, that Titus had for the churches, we are to consider him both in general, as a minister of the gospel, and in particular, as an agent in the work of charity.

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That which Titus is here commended for, is the *earnest care* he had for those of the church of Corinth, and for their spiritual welfare. And concerning this we may observe,

(1.) Though Titus was not under any particular obligation to the Corinthians, as their settled pastor, yet he had an earnest care for them, and they were very much influenced by his care, and were very observant of what he said to them. He did not ask, What are they to me? nor was he asked, what he had to do to concern himself about them. For our Saviour has taught us in the parable of the good Samaritan, that we must look upon him as our neighbour, whom we have opportunity of showing kindness to, or receiving kindness from, without distinction of nations in the world, or congregations in the church, further than prudential considerations, and the rules of good order, may direct. God is no respecter of persons in his bounty, nor must we be so in ours. Titus has an earnest care in his heart to make himself a blessing wherever he comes, and such should we have; we must study to serve some good purpose in every place where providence casts our lot; which is the meaning of Solomon's similitude, *If the tree fall towards the south, or towards the north, in the place where the tree falls, there it shall be*, and be of some use or other. The more extensive our usefulness is, the more it resembles his goodness whose tender mercies are over all his works. Wherever we see a human face, we may conclude there is a human soul, and if we can do any thing, we must have compassion upon it, and help it, remembering who it was that said, *Am I my brother's keeper?* Did we duly consider the worth of precious souls, we would have an earnest care for them. We should look upon those about us, though they be all of them strangers to us, as our fellow-creatures, and partakers of the same nature with us, as our fellow-christians, and partakers of the same grace with us; they are or may be so, and then remember that our rule is, *As we have opportunity, to do good to all men, but especially to them that are of the household of faith.*

(2.) Though Titus had many to take care of, many churches that he visited and interested himself in the affairs of, yet his care for each of them was an earnest care. The stream of his pious concern run broad, and yet it run deep; he loved many, and yet he loved much; and herein he walked as he had blessed Paul for an example, who took upon him daily the care of all the churches, and yet had such a tender affection for particular believers, that if any one were weak, it weakened him, if any one were offended, it made him burn. The extensiveness of his care abated nothing of the earnestness of it. When Paul said, that he would gladly spend and be spent for the Corinthians, he immediately adds concerning Titus, that he *walked in the same spirit, walked in the same steps.*

Some are made remiss and careless by the greatness of their undertaking, they grasp at too much, and then think that will excuse them in their neglects; but the more Titus had to do, the more closely and vigorously he applied himself to it; that though he could not be in two places at once, yet he might do two days' work in one by a double diligence. What a great deal of good work may a good man do in his place, if he go on in it with an earnest care, like that of Titus here; a care to time things aright, to improve opportunities, to do the work of God with as little noise as may be, and to avoid every thing that is foreign to our business, or diverting from it. We should have an earnest care to husband well the thoughts of our heart, and the minutes of our time, that neither of them be idled away, and suffered to run waste, and then what a great deal of good might we bring about. Though a wise man would not thrust himself into a hurry of business, nor have more irons in the fire than he can look after, yet a good man would covet a fulness of business, according as his capacity is, that whenever his Master comes he may be found doing.

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for our sloth, but rather a spur to our diligence. Others are busy, let not us be idle; though we have but two talents, though we have but one to trade with, if we be diligent and faithful, we shall have as sure a reward as those who are intrusted with five.

You here have lost a minister who had a care, an earnest care, for souls, and for their welfare in both worlds.

[1.] His care began at the right end, for it was in the first place about his own soul, and the prosperity and salvation of that. This charity must begin at home. Paul's charge to Timothy is, *Take heed to thyself* first, that thou mayst *save thyself*, 1 Tim. iv. 16. and those are not likely to do any thing to purpose for the souls of others, who are regardless of their own, to show others the way to heaven, who walk not in it themselves. In vain were we made keepers of the vineyards, if our own vineyards we have not kept. You are witnesses for him who is gone, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably he walked among you; that his conversation in the world was in simplicity and godly sincerity, with plainness and integrity, and, as became an Israelite indeed, without guile; not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, as one whose earnest care it was, and the top of his ambition, to approve himself to God, and to be accepted of him. Of him his praise was, and not of men.

His concern for his own spiritual and eternal welfare expressed itself very much when he saw the day approaching, in his earnest desire to make sure work for another world: after serious inquiries into the state of his own soul, he said with a pleasing earnestness, to one who found him musing, and it seemed to be the result of many thoughts, "Well, if we stand in a covenant relation to God as ours, all is safe and well." He often expressed the admiring sense he had of the free grace of God in Christ to his soul; ascribed all the glory of his comforts and hopes to that grace, and in a dependance upon that, enjoyed a holy security and serenity of mind. Though he still maintained a godly jealousy of himself, and a humble fear lest he should seem to come short, yet he finished joyfully with this word, and it was one of the last words he was heard to say, *I know, the Lord is my rock, and my God.* The assurance of this was it that enabled him to bid death welcome, and even in that darksome valley to fear no evil. Those cannot sink who have the Lord for their rock, to stay themselves upon; those cannot but be happy, eternally happy, who have him for their God. And can you say, my brethren, can you say upon good grounds, that the Lord is your rock, and your God? Have you covenanted with him, and devoted yourselves to him, and do you make it your constant care and business to please him? Your ministers have souls to save as well as you, and upon the same terms; and they call you to build upon no other foundation, but what they build upon themselves; to venture in no other vessel, but what they themselves venture in, into another world. O that the comfort which those have found in their dying moments, who have by faith made the Lord their rock, their God, might engage you all this day to avouch him for yours, and now to commit your spirits into his hand, to be sanctified and ruled by the word and Spirit of his grace, and then you may cheerfully at death commit your spirits into his hand to be received into everlasting habitations, may do it with a triumphant confidence, knowing whom you have believed, even one who is able to keep what you have committed to him against that day; if the Lord be your rock, and your God, he will be so to death, through death, and beyond death, and you may glory in him.

[2.] He had an earnest care for that particular congregation which was under his charge; you here can witness for him that he had a concern for your souls, and greatly longed after you all, even *travailed in birth again to see Christ formed in you.* He had indeed *curam animarum—the cure of souls*, and did not make his charge a sinecure. You know how constant he was with you, how rarely he was absent from you, scarce one Lord's day in a year; how he was in his element when he was in your service, and how solicitous to do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying. You know how he laboured among you, even when he laboured under the burthens of old age, and how lively he was in praying and preaching, even when in other things his natural force was so much abated. He had sometimes observed to his friends, that his work and his strength kept pace together; when he went into the pulpit he seemed to have fresh supplies of strength and vigour, and to forget his weakness, but when he had done his work he became as at other times; which, as it was an evidence that his heart was in his work, so it was an instance of the fulfilling of the promises, *As the day, so shall the strength be;* and *They who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; shall still bring forth fruit in old age*, even when the *youths faint and are weary, to show that the Lord is upright.* What other proofs he gave of his earnest care for your souls, in visiting you, conversing with you, and watching over you, you would do well to recollect, that now you have lost him, you may still be gainers by his labours of love among you.

[3.] He had an earnest care for other congregations, and for the progress and success of the work of God in them. He had an earnest care for many congregations in this city, for their supply, their order, and the preservation of peace and love in them. One instance that I must not omit is, the earnest care he took about the morning-lecture, every day.

kept up a fortnight at a place, and then removing to another: he has been long (as I have heard) the principal person who has concerned himself about it, and been active in it, to put it into a method, and to direct the removals of it; wherein he has done good service to the interests of religion in your city; for I hope wherever it comes it brings a blessing along with it, and many souls have had cause to bless God for it. And I trust, now he is gone, God will put the same earnest care into the heart of some or other for the keeping up of that good work, that it may not suffer damage by his removal. Nor did his care confine itself to this city, and the congregations here, but he had an earnest care for many places in the country, at a great distance, to see them well provided for, and ministers conveniently settled. And though, being indisposed to travel, he seldom went in person into the country, yet by letter and applications here in this centre, he showed what *a conflict he had*, as Paul speaks, for many who never *saw his face in the flesh, that their hearts might be comforted, and knit together in love.* He was always ready to advise young ministers, and assist them with his interest, many of whom, therefore, with good reason called him Father, and will bless God who put such a care into his heart for them. Thus he did good at a distance, thus he did lasting good, the fruit whereof remains; and such good, large souls will covet to do. Those who have opportunity of helping young people into the world, of helping them into business, and do it, do good service not only to their own, but to the next, generation; much more do they so, who forward the best employment, wherein the honour of Christ, and the welfare of the souls of men, is so nearly interested, and so help to preserve the best entail.

Let us now see what improvement we may make of this part of Titus's care as a minister, thus in some measure copied out.

1. It sets a good example before ministers, whose hearts should in like manner be full of earnest care about the work they have to do, and the great trust committed to them; and happy were it for the church, if they were all thus. The ministry requires an earnest care, so great and important is the undertaking, and so many the difficulties that are to be grappled with, and got over: nothing will be brought to pass in it by a loose, careless, desultory mind, that has a habit of trifling.

Let those who enter upon the work of the ministry seriously examine themselves, whether they can and will take care, and take pains, for if not, they will have reason to fear lest the work suffer by falling into their hands. The Hebrew phrase for being consecrated is, having *the hand filled:* those who are employed to minister in holy things, Exod. xxviii. 41. have their hands full of work, and therefore need to have their heads and hearts full of care. Let those who are engaged in this work, make a business of it, or they make nothing of it. Mr. Perkins took it for his motto, *Minister verbi es, hoc age—Remember this, thou art a minister of the word.* We must take heed to the ministry we have received, that we fulfil it; must be in care to pray well, and preach well, and live well, in care to find out profitable matter, and acceptable words, words upon the wheels; in care to find out the truth, to understand it ourselves, to deliver it aright, and accommodate it to the capacities of those we speak to, must be in care to give good instructions, to set good examples, and at all times speak and act with circumspection. There is need of an earnest care in watching over ourselves, and over the flock, that we may approve ourselves to our Master, may guard against the tempter, that none of the souls committed to our charge may perish, or if they do, that their blood may not be required at our hand. The charge we have received, the necessities and worth of souls, the shortness and uncertainty of our opportunities of service, the many eyes that are upon us, especially his who is all eye, and above all, the account we must shortly give to the chief Shepherd, forbid us to trifle, and oblige us to go on in our work with an earnest care.

2. It lays an engagement upon people, who have been or are under the care, the earnest care, of faithful ministers. You here have long been well taken care of, and well provided for, the dresser of your vineyard has, through grace, done his part, and now he is removed, suffer the word of exhortation.

(1.) Examine yourselves how you have improved under his care, his earnest care, for you, and whether your profiting has appeared in any proportion to the opportunities you have enjoyed; whether your growth in knowledge and grace has been answerable to the care that has been taken of you, and the pains that has been taken with you. What are you the better for all the good sermons you have heard here, all the sacraments you have received, and all the helps you have had for your souls, in season and out of season? You have had among you an aged witness for Christ, and his truths and ways; to you *days have spoken*, and the *multitude of years* has been *teaching you wisdom*, wherein you have had advantages above most of your neighbours; and it may justly be expected, that you should be above others a solid, serious, judicious people: and is it so? Many times *three years* God has come among you *seeking fruit*, and what has he found? Seeking fruit in your closets and families, in your callings and converse, the fruits of righteousness, and have you not frustrated his expectations? With some, perhaps, when he *looked for grapes, behold wild grapes.* Consider now with yourselves, whether you were the joy of your minister that is gone, or his grief. Whether by your fruitfulness you recompensed his care of you, or by your loose and careless walking you ill

requited him for it. Are any of you yet barren in this vineyard, yet cumbering the ground? O that you would be alarmed by the death of your minister! You are all strangers to me, but you are known to God. And O that his word, which is quick and powerful, might take hold of your consciences! While your minister was with you he interceded for you, as well as laboured with you, *Lord, let the* barren fig-tree *alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it:* and is it yet barren? Know then, that the death of your minister is a call to you to bring forth fruit at length, and then all shall be well; but if his life and labours having been in vain, his death be so too, you will have the more to answer for when the day comes that you will be cut down. He is now gone to give up his account; let each of you think, what account can he give of me? If he give up his account with grief, that will be, as the apostle speaks, *unprofitable for you.* But I hope there are those, there are many among you, in whom he saw the fruit of his labour, and his earnest care, whom he thanked God for, as they for him, and who will be his crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord. And what a joyful meeting will there be between him and them in that day.

(2.) If ministers have and should have such an earnest care for your souls, should not you much more have an earnest, a more earnest, care for your own souls? You are nearest to yourselves, and this is one talent you are each of you intrusted with; you have a precious soul to take care of: and what care do you take of it? What provision do you make for it? for its present cure and comfort, and for its future bliss? What care do you take to secure it from the enemies and evils to which it is exposed, and to supply its necessities? This is the charge given to every one of you, *Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently.* —Keep thy heart above all keepings. Be in care to get necessary food and clothing for your souls, rest and refuge for them, and a portion for them that will last as long as they must last. Commit the keeping of them to Jesus Christ, as those who are in care to have that done for them which none but he can do. The care your ministers have taken, and do take, for your souls, though they are accepted of God in it, if they be sincere, yet it will be no advantage to you, if you take not care for your own souls, nay, it will come into the account against you, as an aggravation of your carelessness.

(3.) If ministers must have this earnest care for the souls of those under their charge, surely parents and masters of families ought to have some care, to have an earnest care, for the spiritual welfare of those under their charge, their children, their servants, to restrain them from that which would be to the prejudice and ruin of their souls, and to provide that for them which is necessary to their well-being. You are in care for their bodies, to provide what is fit for them, you would think yourselves worse than infidels if you did not; and are not their souls more precious, and is not provision for them more necessary? Nature has put into your hearts an earnest care for their temporal lives, O that grace might in like manner principle you with a concern for their spiritual lives! Be in care to teach them the knowledge of God, that they may not perish through ignorance, in care by the most proper methods to drive out the foolishness that is bound up in their hearts; in care to make good your undertaking for them when you presented them to baptism, which was to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; in care that they may not perish through any default of yours. There are many who are forward to condemn ministers for their neglects, who therein do but condemn themselves; who are non-residents in their own houses, or are blind and dumb there in the things of God, and are in no care that they and their houses should serve the Lord. But you, I hope, are of those who look well to the ways of their household, as those who must give an account of that stewardship.

2. We now come to consider Titus as an active instrument at this time in a work of charity that was on foot: and though ordinarily it was not fit that they who gave themselves to the word and prayer should serve tables, and therefore the collection and distribution of the church's alms was committed to the deacons, who, to speak in the language of the Old Testament, had care of *the outward business of the house of God;* yet in an extraordinary case the apostles themselves were employed in service of that kind. We read of relief sent to the brethren who were in Judea, sent to the elders or ministers of the respective congregations, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul, Acts xi. 29, 30. and of a contribution made by them of Macedonia and Achaia, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, Rom. xv. 26. It was in the promoting and carrying on of this good work that Titus discovered this earnest care for the Corinthians.

(1.) It is easy to apprehend, that herein he showed an earnest care for the poor saints at Jerusalem, for whose use this collection was made, and a great concern for them, that they should be speedily and plentifully relieved in their present distress; and they would have reason to say, *Thanks be to God, that put into the heart of Titus this care* for us, and our families, for otherwise we might have perished. Titus heard what straits they were reduced to, and as one who put his soul into their souls' stead, laid out himself to get supply for them. Though Titus was a Greek, and was never circumcised, as Timothy was, and upon that account the saints at Jerusalem (many of whom retained too great an affection for the ceremonial law) were perhaps cool towards him, yet he was active to do them service, as Paul also

was, though he was the apostle of the Gentiles, and saw some reason to doubt whether the service he had for Jerusalem would be accepted of the saints there; for as our love, so our liberality, must not be confined to those who are just of our own sentiment and way, but in this instance, as well as others, we must be governed by a catholic charity, and as we have opportunity, must do good to all men, but must in a particular manner distribute to the necessities of saints. We may suppose, that this relief being sent to the elders, was intended chiefly for their support, because the people were poor, and persecuted, and in many places but few, and could not maintain them; so that it seems to have been not only an act of charity to the poor, but an act of piety towards God, being intended for the support of the gospel, and the recompence of those who had suffered loss for Christ's sake; for they were the believing Hebrews who had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods, Heb. x. 34. This was the good work that Titus had this earnest care to help forward.

And it was good work of this kind that our deceased friend and father did abound in, did abide in to the last. He was himself ready to every good work, and willing to communicate to his power, yea, and beyond his power; what he did himself in charity he concealed, as much as possible, from those about him, and was so far from boasting of it, that, according to our Saviour's rule, his left hand knew not what his right hand did: and he was not only liberal, but he devised liberal things, and had projects for doing good; his head was still working that way, as one who looked not on his own things only, or chiefly, but on the things of others; of others' souls, of others' bodies. I have been told that it was very much by his influence and management, that the fund which is kept up by many of the well-disposed congregations in this city, for the assistance and encouragement of ministers in the country, whose congregations are poor, was first set on foot: and there are many in all parts of the kingdom whose loins, nay, whose souls, bless him, and the many others, both ministers and people, who promote and supply it, and bless God for him and them. If a cup of cold water given to prophets, to disciples, in the name of disciples and prophets, shall in no wise lose its reward, what a full reward shall be given from the Lord our God to those by whose generous liberality families of prophets are helped with food for the body, and congregations of disciples with food for the soul. And I have had opportunity of observing (and I think it was praise-worthy, and very exemplary) his diligent and constant attendance, not only upon the meetings for the prudent and regular distribution of that charity, but upon the week-day lecture, where he could have opportunity of meeting with ministers, to whom, or by whom, he might be serviceable; which showed how much his heart was upon it to do good. He was very active, as I am informed, in furnishing poor ministers, and candidates for the ministry, with useful books: a great deal of money, and time, and pains, he bestowed this way; and herein his earnest care reached as far as the north of Scotland, large sums being procured by him for the erecting of libraries there: and an excellent method it was, both for the diffusing of knowledge to distant places, and the preserving of it to future ages. In his labours for carrying on that and other pious designs, he was indefatigable to the last, and his diligence kept pace with his earnest care. He had had an acquaintance with divers parts of the kingdom; was born in Leicestershire; the first fruits of his ministry were at Petworth in Sussex; from that place he was thrown out (from a curacy there) at the Restoration. But upon that, Providence cast his lot in Yorkshire, where he continued about seventeen years, and then removed to this city. And what a blessing he was to that county, by his extensive beneficence, and care for them, after his removal hither, I am told, there are many who will witness, who never saw his face.

(2.) It is as true, though not so easily apprehended, that Titus showed as earnest a care for the Corinthians, whom he persuaded to do good, as for the saints at Jerusalem, whom he desired that this good might be done to. He appeared in this matter no less solicitous for those whom he applied himself to, than for those whose cause he pleaded. The churches of Macedonia had been very forward in bringing in their quota to this contribution, even their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality; and this is called the *grace of God bestowed upon the churches of Macedonia.* The good work they did for God, was the effect of a good work he wrought in them, and that was an evidence of his good will towards them, and therefore is called *his grace bestowed on them;* for it is certain, instead of making God our debtor by any service we do to him, the more we do for him the more we are indebted to him for putting us into a capacity, and giving us an opportunity, to honour him, and especially for inclining our hearts to do it, and accepting of us in the doing of it.

Now Titus had an earnest care for the Corinthians, that they who came not behind in any gift, might not come behind in this gift;[d] he was in care that they should not be slow in their contributions, because Paul had boasted of them, that *Achaia was ready a year ago;*[e] and in care that they should not be illiberal in them, but that what was gathered should be considerable: he was in care that they should give like themselves.

[d] 1 Cor. i. 7.

[e] 2 Cor. ix. 2.

The Corinthians were generally a rich people, and lived great; whence it became a proverb, *Non cuivis homini contingit adire Corinthum—Every man cannot pretend to live at Corinth.* Now Titus was jealous of them, lest they should pinch their charity to feed their luxury, and therefore laid out himself among them, to persuade them to give handsomely upon this occasion, that it might not be said they had much, but they spent it upon themselves; they were rich in wealth, but poor in good works. He was in care they should give like other churches, and so preserve their reputation, and keep up the figure they made among the churches. The particular kindness he had for this church of Corinth, did not put him upon contriving how he might excuse them from this good work, or make it easy to them, that it might be the more kind to him; but on the contrary, because he loved them, he was very earnest with them to do more than otherwise they would have done.

And thus this good man whom we have parted with, besides the good works he did at his own expense, laid out himself to provoke others to love and to good works, to persuade them to it, and to bring about great designs of good by the assistance of many, which could not be compassed by one. He had an acquaintance with many considerable families, both in city and country, and an interest in them; which he improved not for himself, but for the public good. All who knew him valued him for his tried integrity, and that great plainness and sincerity which was remarkable in him; whatever he did, like Gaius, he did it faithfully, both to the brethren and to strangers; and, therefore, what was put into his hands for the carrying on of any good work, was deposited with an entire satisfaction. He used to say, that he kept up his acquaintance with persons of estate and figure as long as he could improve it for the doing of good, and when it would no longer be made to serve that purpose, he let it drop; "for," said he, "I'll never adore a gilded post."

Now my text leads me to observe, that herein appeared his earnest care for those whose assistance he procured in works of charity; as much for their *doing well*, as for the *well doing* of those whom he procured assistance for. All agree that those he begged for have lost a friend, but I must tell you, that those he begged of have a great loss of him too; they have lost one who, even in that, was a true friend, and one who had an earnest care for them. I doubt it will be hard to convince people of this. I fear there are many to whom their friends and ministers are scarce welcome, when they come to recommend objects of charity to them, and press them to give liberally where the case is urgent; they are glad to see them, but not when they come on that errand. If they come to visit them when they are sick, to advise them when they are in distress, or to be any ways helpful to them, they take it as an instance of their earnest care for them; but if they come to them as Titus did to the Corinthians, to beg money of them for the poor saints, they are so far from looking upon it as an instance of their care for them, that they receive them with a stiffness and shyness, as if they came to impose upon them, and to pick their pockets; and if they do give, it is not with that cheerfulness that God delights in.

I would endeavour therefore, for the amending of this matter, to make it out that those are to be accounted your friends, who, with prudence and discretion, propose to you proper objects of charity, and press you to give liberally to them, or for the encouragement of any work of piety; you are to take it kindly, and to reckon it an instance of their earnest care for you. Consider, it is not for themselves that they are thus solicitous, nor in hopes to make any advantage of it to themselves or their own families; nay, on the contrary, it may be a loss and damage to themselves; for with some, at least, the more they implore their interest for others, the less they have to implore upon their own account. They do not herein seek their own things, but as the apostle here did, they studiously avoid that which might give occasion to any to blame them, in this abundance which is administered by them: they hope indeed to obtain an interest in God's blessing, and the saints' prayers, in both which they desire you may come in for a share. It is no pleasure to them to be troublesome to you, and those for whose supply they do solicit you, many times they are no more obliged to than you are, nor more concerned for than you ought to be, so that you have no reason to take unkindly the application they make to you. Nay, it is really for you, that they have this earnest care. Do they propose to you a pressing opportunity to do good? Do they follow it with a pressing importunity? You ought to take it as a kindness to yourselves, and to thank God that he has put that earnest care in their hearts for you. For,

[1.] They would have you to do that which is your duty, a plain, necessary, and great duty, which God requires of all those whom he has intrusted with this world's goods. To love mercy is the good you are as much obliged to as to do justly. To relieve and succour the widows and fatherless in their affliction, is an essential branch of pure religion and undefiled. It is a necessary proof of the love both of God, and of your neighbour, dwelling in you. You are God's tenants, and this is the rent you have to pay, a quit-rent, not a rack-rent, and you are to account it a kindness to have your rent called for, for you will get nothing by going behind-hand. You are stewards of the manifold grace of God, and you must lay out your Lord's goods among your Lord's servants, and as he directs, and whoever assists you

n doing so, is your friend, and has a care for you. It s your duty to honour the Lord with your substance, ınd thus you are put into the way of doing it.

Ministers must charge them that are rich in this world, who have more than just a necessary subsist-ence for themselves and their families, with what they have to spare to do good, and to communicate. You ought to give alms of such things as you have, and to be ready to every good work. Put us not to prove that it is your duty to give just so much, and to such a person, when it is plain it is your duty as you have opportunity to do good to all men, and to give God his dues out of what he has given you; of which under the law he appointed the priests and the poor to be his receivers. Now those who devise liberal things for you, are in care for you, that you may not omit your duty, or be found in the neglect of it; because omissions are sins, and must come into judgment, and particularly the omission of this duty; for you know very well, those who in the great day are bid to depart with a curse, have this charged upon them, *I was hungry, and you gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink.* And are not they kind to you, who do all they can to prevent your falling under that charge, and perishing under that doom? Say not, if they did not trouble you with their representations, you should not know it, and that would serve for an excuse; for if you do not know who are objects of charity, because you would not, but discountenanced those that recommended them to you, it is all one as if you did know it, and would not relieve them; *If thou sayest, Behold, we know it not, doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it, and he that keepeth thy soul, doth he not know it?*

The duty of giving to works of piety and charity, is what we are naturally backward to; we would willingly keep what we have, and our corrupt hearts can easily find out excuses to shift it off; and therefore we have the more need to be called to it, and to have even pure minds stirred up by way of remembrance, and provoked by the zeal of others, and their forwardness. Those who have themselves an earnest care to do their duty, will reckon those their best friends who have an earnest care to quicken them to it, and to help them to overlook those winds and clouds by which they are in danger of being driven off from sowing and reaping. It is a care for your precious souls, that they may not lie under guilt and wrath; a care like that of Paul's, *lest by some means the tempter have tempted you*, and a spirit of worldliness prevail over you, and so the labour of your ministers among you should be in vain. We have reason to be as thankful to God for their advice who excite us to duty, as David was for Abigail's, when she was instrumental to prevent his sin.

[2.] They would have you do that which will be your honour, and which will put a reputation upon you, and therefore it must be looked upon as an instance of their earnest care for your preferment. In acts of bounty and beneficence you resemble God, who *is good* and *doeth good*, and therefore does good, because he is good. None come nearer being perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect, than those who are merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful. Hereby you become blessings to your generation, and ornaments to the profession you make of religion; you give occasion to your ministers and friends to boast of you, as Paul did of these Corinthians, and to give thanks (2 Cor. ix. 2, 11.) to God for you: this is a virtue that is as much a praise as any other. It seems to have been a common saying of our Saviour's, *It is more blessed to give than to receive;* it is more honourable, and more comfortable; and therefore you are to reckon those your friends who would have you put in for a share in that blessedness.

You think you do yourselves honour with your abundance, when you lay it up in rich clothes, furniture, and equipage, or in splendid entertainments; with these you think you gain and keep up a reputation; but you would do yourselves much more honour with your abundance, if you spared something from those things, and laid it out in works of piety and charity, if you thus honoured God with it, and did good to others. I appeal to yourselves, which is the more honourable and desirable character, to have it said concerning you, "Such a one is a fashionable man, and lives great;" or, "Such a one is a charitable man, and does good." You reckon those have a real care of you who help to support and advance your credit in the way of trade and business, though it may put you to some expense; and is it not the fruit of a much more earnest care for you, to help to maintain your credit in this best and most gainful way of merchandise? If you forfeit the character of being ready to do good, you lose the opportunity of enriching yourselves with the true and most durable treasures.

[3.] They would have you do that which you will have comfort in, and advantage by, in this world, and therefore you are to reckon them your friends, who have a care for you. When you review your expenses, surely there is nothing you reflect upon with more pleasure and satisfaction, than that which you laid out in works of piety and charity; you may look upon it, not as upon that which you spend in housekeeping, it is gone, and you will hear no more of it, but as upon that which you have put into the best fund, ventured in the securest vessel, and set out to the best interest upon the best security, as *bread cast upon the waters*, which you shall *find* again after *many days*. Read Mr. Gouge's book, which he calls, "The surest and safest way of thriving," and you will look upon those as your truest well-wishers who forward you in any work of piety

or charity, as you do upon those who contribute any thing towards your outward prosperity.

Your liberally contributing to any good work will, perhaps, increase what you have in the world, will double it; what is so given is lent to the Lord, and he has given his promise that he will pay it again; and if he expects at his coming to receive his own with usury, no doubt he will so return us our own. However, it will make what we have *clean to us*, it will make it comfortable. Job mentions it as one of the brightest instances of his prosperity, that the *blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him*, and he *caused the widow's heart to sing for joy*. Many a prayer will be put up for you, by those who have an interest at the throne of grace, which you will have the benefit of, and yours, perhaps, when you are gone. It is used as an argument with the people to be kind to the priest, *that he may cause the blessing to rest on thine house*,[f] may do it by his prayers with and for thy family. Those therefore have an earnest care for you, who would not have you, for the saving of a little money, to forfeit that blessing, or come short of it.

4. They would have you do that which will be fruit abounding to your account in the day of recompence. If works of piety and charity be done from a pious, charitable principle, in faith, and in dependence upon Christ for the acceptance of them, though they cannot merit any thing at God's hand, for of his own we give him, yet he has graciously assured us, that they shall be rewarded in the resurrection of the just, for God is not unrighteous to forget them. You know when, and upon what account, it will be said, *I was hungry and you gave me meat, I was thirsty and you gave me drink*. If it be not repaid in this world, there is the more behind; the heavenly inheritance will make amends for all. Those who press you to good works are in care that you may not miss of this recompence, may not lose this good bargain, which will be so much to your advantage. They would have you to use your estates, so that with them you may make to yourselves friends, that when ye fail, ye may be received into everlasting habitations.

This was St. Paul's care for the Philippians; they were well-disposed to be kind to him, but they *lacked opportunity*, they wanted some friend to do that for them which Titus here did for the Corinthians, to make a collection among them for Paul's assistance, and to convey it carefully to him. Now Paul shows himself well pleased that at length Epaphroditus had done it; but he professes it was not so much upon his own account, that he might hereby be enabled to live the more comfortably in prison, *Not that I desire a gift*, I could live very contentedly without it; but chiefly upon their account, that they might have the comfort and reward of it, in that day when all we now say and do will be called over again. *I desire fruit that may abound to your account*, that may be reckoned among the fruits of your righteousness, which shall be repeated in life eternal; when not a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, to a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall be left out of the account.

Now lay all this together, and then tell me whether those are not indeed your friends, and have not an earnest care for you, who call upon you to do good and to communicate. Look upon them then as your friends, and look pleasantly upon them when they come upon this errand; thank them that they will take the trouble of a good work so much upon themselves, and yet bring you in for sharers in the honour, comfort, and reward of it. Those who would so manage for you, in some advantageous undertaking for the world, so that you might have nothing to do but to pay in your money, and receive it again with great increase, you would reckon yourselves exceedingly obliged to. Nor think it enough to be courteous and civil to your almoners, and to give them a good look when they come a begging to you, but be free and generous in your almsgiving, and in what you contribute to every good work, that you may encourage those who have this earnest care of you to come to you again. God gives liberally and upbraids not; and so should we, that we may be like him. Remember, it is seed sown, and observe the husbandman's rule in sowing his ground, "Give it seed enough; for if you sow sparingly, you will reap accordingly." And now you have lost one who used to recommend objects of charity to you, be the more inquisitive after them yourselves; that you may in no wise lose your reward.

II. It is mentioned to the praise of God, that he *put* this earnest care into the heart of Titus for them; and thanks are given to him for it. Now thanks be to God, who by his providence brought Titus to Corinth, and by his grace excited and enabled him to do this good office there.

See how solicitous blessed Paul is upon all occasions to ascribe the glory of all the good that was done, whether by others or by himself, to the grace of God, and to own in it the influences and operations of that grace; *I laboured*, others laboured, *yet not I*, yet not they, *but the grace of God which was with me*, and was with them; for *by the grace of God I am what I am*, and they are what they are. The doctrine of free grace, which is pure gospel, he not only inculcates in his preaching and writing, but applies it, and speaks as one who did himself believe it, and was full of it; for he takes care to cast every crown at the feet of free grace, in that he boasts all

[f] Ezek. xliv. 30.

ıe day long, so as to exclude all other boasting; ı that he is made always to triumph; *Not unto us, ) Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory.* Now bserve here,

1. That God can *put* things into men's hearts, beond what was expected. He is the Sovereign of he heart, not only to enjoin it what he pleases by his aw, but to influence it, and to infuse into it by his rovidence and grace as he pleases. He has access o men's hearts, knows what is in them, what would e in them, and can expunge and insert according o his own will, and they themselves not be aware f it. He can extinguish the sparks of wrath he inds there, and restrain them, can blow up the sparks f love he finds there into a flame. They are all in ıis hand, as the clay in the hand of the potter, and ıe fashioned them so as to serve his own purposes by hem. The way of man is not in himself, he cannot hink what he will, but the wise God can overrule ıim. If the hearts of kings are in the hand of the Lord, to be turned as the rivers of water which way oever he pleases, though their hearts, of all men's, are most absolute, and arbitrary, and unsearchable, much more the hearts of inferior persons. Let no man boast of his free thought, when whatever devices are in men's hearts, it is not their counsel, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand. See in this how God governs the world, by the hold he has of the consciences of men, and his power to put things into their hearts, so that they shall accomplish his designs, as *his hand*, though *they mean not so, neither do their heart think so.*

2. That whatever good is in the heart of any, it is God that puts it there. If Titus have in his heart an earnest care for the spiritual welfare of the Corinthians, though he is a very good man, and one whom much good may be expected from, yet even this is not of himself, it is not to be called a natural affection, it is a gracious one, for the grace of God wrought it there, that grace which worketh in good men both to will and to do that which is good. Perhaps Titus was steering his course another way, when God put it into his heart to come to Corinth; or, when he came thither on this errand, perhaps he did not design to press the thing with any importunity, but only to propose it, and leave it to them to do as they would: but, quite beyond his own intention, God put it into his heart to be urgent in the matter, which had a wonderful good effect; put zeal into his heart for the carrying on of this good work, and then put words into his mouth wherewith to press it.

If we have an earnest care for our own souls, and for their spiritual and eternal welfare, it is God that puts it into our hearts, that gives it to us, so the word here used signifies, it is he that plants it in us; if we have an earnest care for the souls of others, particularly of theirs who are under our charge, we have it from God, for we are not sufficient of ourselves so much as to think a good thought, much less fix a good principle, or form a good project, but all our sufficiency is of *God.* Whatever evil there is in our hearts, it is of ourselves, it is, like weeds in the garden, the spontaneous product of the corrupt soil; this God sees there, he foresees it, and can tell the sinner long before, *At such a time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought;* but it is not of his putting there; no, it is the good that is found there, all that, and only that, that God puts there. He will own that, and we must own him in it.

3. That Christ's ministers are in a particular manner all that, and that only, to his churches that he makes them to be. They are stars that shine with a borrowed light, and shed no other benign influences, but what are derived from the Sun of Righteousness. If they have a care, an earnest care, a natural care, for the souls committed to their charge, it is God who has put it into their hearts, it is his grace in them that makes them blessings to the places where they are, whether statedly or occasionally; if they bring a seasonable word that reaches the conscience, and does good, it is God that puts it into their mouths, and gives them what they shall speak. Paul, that master-workman, says nothing of what he has wrought, but of what Christ has wrought by him. Wherefore look we then at Peter and John, and Paul and Apollos, Acts iii. 12. as though by their own power they did what they do? No, they are no more, no better, than what the free grace of God makes them. The most able, the most active, ministers, and the most famed for industry and success, if they were left to themselves, and to their own wisdom and strength, would be the unprofitable burthens of the earth; would be like Samson when his hair was cut, and the spirit of the Lord was departed from him, weak as other men, nay, and worse than other men, like salt which has lost its savour. We must therefore look up to God, by prayer, for that grace which is necessary to make the stewards of the mysteries of God both skilful and faithful; and lament the case of those careless ministers, who, like the ostrich, are hardened against the souls under their charge, as though they were not theirs, for it is a sign that God has deprived them of wisdom, and has not imparted to them understanding.

4. That the grace of God is particularly to be seen and owned in the progress and success of any work of charity, as this here, which Titus was active in among the Corinthians. In this we may be tempted to think there needs no more, but that common concurrence of the divine Providence which is necessary to the negociating of every other affair; but it seems by this we have as much need of the working of the Spirit and grace of God, to enable us to give

alms well, as to enable us to pray and preach well. What is necessary to an act of beneficence, must be put into our hearts from on high, as well as what is necessary to an act of devotion. It is God who puts it into the heart of all the parties concerned to do their part in it: he puts an earnest care into the hearts of those who manage a work of charity, and a generous, liberal disposition into the hearts of those who contribute to it. And therefore the apostle concludes his account here of the liberality of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia, with praises to God, not only for giving them estates wherewithal to do good, but much more for giving them hearts to do good with them; *Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.* Grace to use what we have in the world to the glory of God, is an unspeakable gift, for which we ought to be very thankful. And we are taught the same by the example of David, who, when he found the princes and people generous in their subscriptions for the building of the temple, blessed God for it, as an admirable instance of his favour and grace, by which he put a great deal of honour upon them: but, *Who am I*, says he, *and what is my people, that we should be able* to overcome that selfishness and narrow-spiritedness which is in our corrupt natures, and *should offer* so much, and so *willingly*, and *cheerfully, after this sort; for all things come of thee.* Those therefore who have any good project upon the wheel, should look up to God for his grace to carry it on, otherwise it will be abortive. Those we persuade to do good, we should pray for, that God would incline their hearts to it, and then only our persuasions will prevail.

Let us now close all, with some inferences from these observations.

1. If this be so, then those who do good have nothing to glory in; for whatever good they do, it was God that put it into their hearts to do it, and therefore he must have all the glory. Boasting is hereby for ever excluded, for in the Lord alone we have not only righteousness for the remission of our sins, but strength and sufficiency for the performance of our duties. How absurd, how unjust, is it for us to be proud of any good we do, when without Christ we can do nothing; we cannot so much as be content with such things as we have, but through Christ strengthening us, much less do good with them.

This forbids us to trust to our own good works, as if by them we could merit any thing at the hand of God; we must not entertain such a thought, not only because none of our goodness extends to God, but because all our goodness is derived from him; and the more good we do, the more we are indebted to him for that grace by which we are enabled to do it, and the honour he puts upon us in employing us for him. We never speak a good word, or do a good work, but it comes from that good which God first put into our hearts, so that all being from him, all must be to him; he *planted*, he *watered*, and he *gave the increase*, and therefore his must all the fruit be, and to his honour it must be devoted.

This obliges us, when we have done all, to say, *We are unprofitable servants*, not only because we have done no more than what was our duty to do, but because we have done no more than God enabled us to do. It obliges us also to say, that God is a good master, who works in us what he requires of us, and then graciously accepts and rewards his own work, as if it had been ours, so far is he from being that hard man who reaps where he had not sown. And then our services turn most to our honour, when we take care to transmit the honour of them to God. Nehemiah could not have put a greater reputation upon his undertaking to build up the walls of Jerusalem, than he did, when he said, it was what God had *put in his heart to do at Jerusalem*, Neh. ii. 12. and it magnifies Cyrus's proclamation of liberty to the captive Jews, more than the policy or the generosity of it, that *the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus to issue out that proclamation*, Ezra i. 1.

This holy, good man we are now speaking of, whose works praise him in the gates, took care that the praise should not terminate in himself, but be transmitted to God, the Father of lights, and giver of every good gift. When a friend of his who visited him in his sickness, mentioned to him his great usefulness, and what comfort he might now have in reflection upon it, he humbly replied, "Alas, I have done but little service for God in my generation; I wish I had done more: but God is good and gracious." Whence I observe, that the comforts and hopes of dying Christians are founded upon God's goodness, not upon their own. Thus, when Nehemiah had done abundance of good service to the house of God, and the offices thereof, his prayer is, not *Reward* me according to the greatness of my merit, but *Spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.* "I was but a pen in God's hand," (said good Mr. Baxter,) "and what praise is due to a pen?" Thus as God gives grace to the most humble, so he gives humility to the most gracious.

2. If this be so, then those who have any good done them, either for soul or body, must give thanks to God for it, who raised up those who were the instruments of it, and put it into their hearts to do it, and perhaps to do it with an earnest care. We ought indeed to acknowledge their kindness, and to be grateful to them, but that must be in token of our gratitude to God, who, in making them his agents, made them his receivers. But we must look above and beyond them, and give God thanks for them, and for all the kindnesses they have done us. Ezra has no sooner registered and enrolled the ample commission which Artaxerxes gave him in favour of the Jews, but immediately he adds, *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as*

his *into the king's heart*. Which teaches us, to see nd own all the bounty and benefit, all the service nd supply, that comes to us by the hands of our riends, flowing originally from the hand of God. And it is the more to be observed, if it come by the and of those who were unlikely, and unthought of, nd that we least expected it from. If Elijah be ntertained by a poor widow who has but a handful f meal for herself and her son; if the wounded man, ho is looked upon but overlooked by a priest and evite, from whom charity and compassion might ave been expected, and was commonly had, be at ength taken care of by an honest Samaritan, it must e said, *This is the Lord's doing*, God put it into their earts; and therefore let us give God thanks for our enefactors, and all their benefactions.

When those are removed from us, who have long een upon any account blessings to us, good parents, ood ministers, good friends, instead of murmuring nd quarrelling with God, as if he had done us wrong, e ought to be very thankful to him that ever we had hem, that they were so many ways useful to us, and ere continued to us so long, though we were unworthy of the benefit and comfort we enjoyed by them, and had a thousand times forfeited it. And by these thanksgivings for their lives, let us balance and alleviate our sorrow for their deaths. Thanks be to God, who fitted them for service, and inclined them to it, and put into their hearts an earnest care for us, though perhaps there was nothing in us either deserving or promising, to recommend us to their care. God, who himself does good to the unworthy, puts it into the hearts of good men to do so too; to him therefore we must give thanks.

And these thanksgivings should sometimes look far back; and we should bless God for those who were in the days of old, either by their lasting writings, or by their lasting charities, blessings to posterity; they may not be prayed for, as our living benefactors may, and must be; they are not to be prayed to, as our ever-living Benefactor may, and must be; but the benefit we and others receive by the grace given to them, we may and must give thanks to God for, who put into their hearts an earnest care for those who should come after them. If *what is written*, if what is done, *be for the generation to come*, it fitly follows, *the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.*

3. If this be so, let us hereby be engaged and quickened to do all the good we can in our places; to do the good the Corinthians did, that is, to contribute largely and freely for the support and encouragement of poor saints and poor ministers, according to the ability God has given us; to do the good Titus did, that is, to solicit the cause both of the necessitous, and of the deserving, and to procure assistance for them; to recommend works of piety and objects of charity, as factors in that blessed merchandise; to bring the rich and poor to meet together: according as our capacity is, let us lay out ourselves to do good.

Hereby we shall evidence that God, by his grace, has put some good into our hearts, which the good we do is the fruit and product of, and by which the tree is known. If we be truly charitable, from a good principle, and for a good end, it will turn to us for a testimony, that the Spirit of God has been at work with our hearts, making us acceptable to our father in heaven, and making us meet for our home in heaven: and how can what we have be made to turn to a better or more comfortable account.

Hereby likewise we shall give occasion to many to praise God for us, and for the good which by his grace we are inclined and enabled to do. And how can we better serve the glory of God, and the comfort of his people, than by furnishing our friends with abundant matter for thanksgiving, (that sweet duty,) in which when we are employed, we have, if any where, a heaven upon earth. This was one thing for which Paul reflected with comfort upon his own conversion, that those who heard that a persecutor was become a preacher, glorified God in him. And therefore we must let our light shine before men, that others may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven. If it be an encouragement to charity, to think that we shall have the prayers of the poor, much more is it so to think that God shall have their praises. And so the blessing of him that was ready to perish shall not only come upon us, but shall return, as it ought, to him who is the fountain of all blessing; and when the widow's heart is made *to sing for joy*, it shall *sing to the praise and glory of God.*

4. This may be matter of comfort and support to us, when useful instruments are removed from us. That which made them useful was, that spirit of wisdom, holiness, and love that God gave them, and we are sure that he has the residue of the Spirit, the *excellency* of the Spirit, (so the word is,) with himself, and he can raise up men with the same spirit, with the same excellences of spirit, that shall do him as much service, if he pleases, and do it as well in their day, as those who are gone did in theirs. If God make the spirit of Elijah to rest upon Elisha, he shall be as much the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof, as ever Elijah himself was. And therefore let us not say, *The glory is departed from Israel*, though the hoary heads, who were so much a crown of glory to our tribe, be now in a manner all departed; no, while Zion's God is her everlasting glory, he will take care that Zion's sons shall some or other of them be in their turn a glory to her; *Instead of the fathers shall be the children.* When God has work to do, we are sure he will never want fit instruments to do it with.

It is certain, our fathers, the best and greatest of

them, were no more, no better, than what the grace of God made them, they took all occasions to own it themselves; and it is as certain, there is the same overflowing fulness of grace in Christ that ever there was, *grace for grace*, and the same way of deriving from it; as the *olive-tree is not withered*, so the *golden pipes* (Zech. iv. 12.) are not stopped up. We have therefore reason to hope, that the same God who put an earnest care into their hearts, will put the same into the hearts of those who are entered into their labours; and that grace which was sufficient for them, to carry them through the services and sufferings of their generation, will be sufficient for us too, who have the same work to do, and the same temptations and difficulties to grapple with; and will enable us at length to finish our course, as they did, with joy.

It was a petition which (as I am told) Mr. Stretton frequently put up to God in his prayers with his family, "Lord, grant that we may be useful while we are here, and that we may not be wanted when we are gone." God did make him useful while he was here, many ways useful, useful to the last; and continued long in his usefulness. A great gap is made in our hedge by his death; but may we hope that so many others shall be spirited to do the same work, with the same earnest care, that in a little time we may be able to say, that in answer to the other part of his petition, *he is not wanted?* If God has mercy in store for your city, for the land of our nativity, he will raise up such men of serious piety, and catholic charity, who shall lay out themselves to do good in the world: I trust he has raised up some such; and that the mystical gloss which one of the rabbins puts upon those words, (1 Sam. iii. 3, 4.) *Ere the lamp of God went out, the Lord called Samuel*, has its accomplishment; "That is," says he, "ere God makes the lamp of one prophet to set he kindles another." God grant it may be so at this day in our land, and it would be a token of good to us, that God would not depart from us. Nay, if it be true, as certainly it is, that while the earth remains Christ will have a church in it, we may be sure that as one generation of such passes away, another generation, somewhere or other, shall come, to support the interests of pure and undefiled religion, that thus the name of Christ may endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

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## A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF THE

# LIFE OF THE REV. MR. RICHARD STRETTON.

He was the son of Mr. William Stretton, of great Cleybrook, near Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, where he was born; but was descended from the Strettons of Stretton, in that county.

He was born about the year 1632, but the exact time of his birth could not be recovered for this reason; his father being a puritan, and the minister of his parish such a one as he could not with satisfaction bring his child to be baptized by, he procured one Mr. Moor to baptize him, who was a puritan minister in the neighbourhood; and so he was not registered in the church book.

He often spoke of it as an instance of God's goodness to him, that he enabled his father, though he had many children, to bring him up a scholar.

He had his academical education at New College in Oxford, and was chaplain of the college, as the noted Bishop Gunning had been some time before.

He commenced Master of Arts, July 9, 1658, (*præstitis exercitiis per statuta requisitis—having performed the requisite exercises,*) as appears by a testimonial under the hand of the university register.

In the beginning of that year, having passed through not only his time, but his studies, in the university, he went to be assistant to Dr. Cheynel, at Petworth in Sussex, a great living.

Soon after his settlement there he was publicly and solemnly ordained, and "set apart to the office of a preaching presbyter," (so the testimonial of his ordination runs) "and the work of the ministry, with fasting, prayer, and the imposition of the hands of six presbyters, in the parish church of Arundel, Oct. 26, 1658. He having given sufficient testimony of his competent age, of his unblamable life and conversation, of his diligence and proficiency in his studies, and of his fair and direct calling to the fore-mentioned place; and they upon examination finding him to be duly qualified and gifted for that holy office and employment."

He continued at Petworth till Michaelmas, 1660, when Dr. Cheynel was put out to make room for Dr. King, Bishop of Chichester. Mr. Stretton however staid and preached there till November, (as Dr. Calamy's account is,) having two friends, viz.

Captain Taylor and Mr. Bernard, who were very great with the Bishop, and prevented his sending down any other. The Bishop by them offered Mr. Stretton an hundred pounds per annum, and the choice of any prebend he had that was vacant, if he would be his curate at Petworth; but Mr. Stretton not being satisfied to conform, declined it; and upon the Bishop's sending another down to the place, he quitted it.

Coming to London, quite at a loss how to dispose of himself, Mr. James Nalton providentially met him in the street; and having been spoken to by the Lord Fairfax to recommend a chaplain to him, he presently brought Mr. Stretton to him; and upon his recommendation, my Lord accepted of him, and took him down with him to his seat in Yorkshire, and soon found himself and his family very happy in having such a skilful faithful helper in the things of God.

While he was chaplain to my Lord Fairfax, he married Deborah, daughter of Mr. Robert Moreton, that excellent, pious, useful man, who was some time minister at Church Lawford, near Coventry and sister to Dr. Richard Moreton, who was turned out at Kinver in Staffordshire, and afterwards was a very eminent physician in London, and one of the college. By her he had a child or two born while he was in my Lord's family; and great respect was shown him by the whole family.

He continued there till my Lord Fairfax died, and preached his funeral sermon, which is in manuscript in many hands; as is also a sermon preached while he was there, on occasion of the marriage of a relation of my Lord's.

My Lord was so wonderfully pleased with his great piety and prudence, and excellent behaviour in his family, that at his marriage he settled a very considerable annuity upon him for his and his wife's life; which was a great support to him all his days. Thus God raised up friends for those who in the way of their duty cast themselves upon his providence.

The respect which was put upon him while he was in my Lord Fairfax's family, gave him an opportunity of being acquainted with most of the considerable families in those parts. Judge Rokeby, who was made one of the blessings and ornaments of the bench at the revolution, was his intimate friend.

Many eminent divines of the church of England he had likewise an intimacy with; particularly Dr. Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, who was born in Yorkshire. Mr. Stretton, while he was chaplain to my Lord Fairfax, being called upon some business to London, Dr. Tillotson would have no denial, but he must preach for him at St. Lawrence's church, as a country minister; but it coming out some how or other that he was a nonconformist, the Doctor had a private reprimand for it from the Bishop of London. It appears by divers letters to him, found among his papers, that he had many invitations of that kind in the country; and a very friendly correspondence he kept up with many conforming divines, who reposed a great confidence in him, and testified great respect toward him.

Upon the death of the Lord Fairfax, he removed to Leeds, and settled there with a congregation of dissenters, to whom his ministry was highly acceptable; and there he continued six or seven years.

While he was there he buried three sons in a little time; two of them of the small-pox, and in a few days one of another. It was an affliction that went very near him; and so strong was his natural affection, that it was exercise for all the wisdom and grace he had, to bear up under it. There is found among his papers a letter of condolence and consolation written to him upon that occasion by the Earl of Clare, father to the late Duke of Newcastle, who was then abroad in his travels, dated at Paris, June 16, 1677. There appears in it much of serious piety, and a particular friendship that noble Lord had for Mr. Stretton.

In the year 1677, he removed to London, and several dissenters who were at that time either deprived of their ministers, or otherwise unsettled, sat down under his ministry, and he continued with them to his death.

In 1679, he published a paper called, "The Protestant Conformist," or, "A Plea for Moderation," contained in a letter from one conforming minister to another, and his answer to it. It had no name to it, but it met with great acceptance. It was occasioned by a letter from his dear friend Mr. John Thoresby of Leeds, which was likewise printed with it; so I am informed, as likewise of many other things concerning Mr. Stretton, by his son Mr Ralph Thoresby, now of Leeds, that learned antiquary, and Fellow of the Royal Society; who has already obliged the world with the additions to Cambden's Britannia for Yorkshire, and from whom is expected the Antiquities of Leeds; who was a true lover of Mr. Stretton, and was much respected by him.

At the time when the persecution was hot against dissenters, (in 1683,) he was the first of ten ministers who were taken up as living in a corporation, and had the Oxford oath tendered them; "That it is unlawful, upon any pretence whatsoever, to take up arms against the King; which was first contradicted and broken through, and then repealed at the revolution. He had not been at his own house for ten weeks, but the very next morning after his return to it, (so very vigilant were their spies and informers,) by five of the clock in the morning he was seized by the then city-marshal, who secured his papers, and would not suffer him to seal up what he made choice of out of them; and immediately carried him and

them before the king and council. Some present would have his papers looked over, to see if they could find any treason in them, but the king did not encourage it, saying, he believed there was no treason there. As at another time, when a sorry fellow, one Fox, offered to swear that Mr. Stretton, with my Lord Clare, was in the plot then charged upon the dissenters, the king laughed at the information, as altogether improbable and inconsistent with itself.

But though he was dismissed from the council-board, he was proceeded against upon the Five-mile Act. That night the marshal took his word for his appearance next morning, when according to his promise he surrendered himself, and was brought before the Lord Mayor, who carried it with great respect and civility to him, importunately desiring him once and again to withdraw for a little time, and consider whether he could not take the enjoined oaths, which he hoped he might, and so escape the penalty of the law. Mr. Stretton told his Lordship, that he would not give the court the trouble of waiting for his answer, for he could not expect to get satisfaction in that case, in so short a time as a regard to that court would only suffer him to take, when he had been many years seeking after it, and could not obtain it. However, my Lord Mayor persisted in his advice, and in compliance with his Lordship's kind desire, he withdrew for some time; but when he returned, told his Lordship he could not do it; which his Lordship said he was sorry for, for then there was no remedy, but he must follow the direction of the law; and sent him to Newgate, where he continued a prisoner six full months. In which time he had a son died, who, in his sickness, earnestly desired to see his father, as the father no doubt did to see the child, but all the interest he could make would not procure him that liberty. During his stay in Newgate, Mr. Smith the ordinary showed him great respect, and called him up more than once into the chapel to assist him in preparing the condemned criminals for their death.

After the expiration of his six months imprisonment he continued still in the city, and preached privately in one place or other among those of his congregation; and never missed any Lord's day, unless now and then it happened that he met with disappointment in the place he was to preach at. And he repeated in his family largely at night, which he sometimes admitted two or three of his friends to the benefit of.

When king James granted liberty by proclamation to protestant dissenters, he made use of it; but he never did or would join in any address of thanks for it, lest he should seem to give countenance to the king assuming a power above the law, and was instrumental to prevent several addresses.

After the glorious revolution, when the dissenters enjoyed their libertics and opportunities again, he applied himself with fresh vigour to his work, and with an abundant satisfaction in the clearness of his call to it, as appears by a single sheet which he then published in the year 1689, which he called, "The Case of the Protestant Dissenters, represented and argued:" which he told a near relation of his, not long before he died, that he was the author of. The whole paper is of such weight, that Dr. Calamy thought fit to insert it at large in his abridgment of Mr. Baxter's Life, page 638 to page 648.

And as he was industrious to justify the dissenters in their practice, so he was to promote every thing that was good among them. It is observed, before, in the sermon, that he took care to direct the removals of the morning-lecture, so as might answer the intention of it: a very useful exercise, which has been kept up for the most part near seventy years, and is now, wherever it comes, for ought I see, well attended.

He was likewise active in accommodating some unhappy differences of opinion that were among them, so as to prevent the mischievous consequences of them. The prudent and pious endeavours which he and others used for that good end, then had, and thanks be to God, still have, a happy effect.

He laid out himself very much to promote works of charity; it was his meat and drink in that way to be doing good. He spared no pains in going about in the city, and writing letters into the country, to promote good works. He was a principal man in setting up and keeping up a fund for the help of poor ministers and congregations in the country, who had not many like-minded, (though blessed be God some there are,) who naturally cared for their state. He made it his business to find out the hands who were able to give, and fit to receive, and to bring them together. Those who were intrusted with the distribution of charities, applied themselves very much to him to recommend to them proper objects of charity, which he did with great prudence and fidelity; and then no wonder if those who needed help applied themselves to him likewise.

He was active to introduce useful books into the world, and to encourage the publishing of them, as Dr. Manton's Works, to the fifth volume, to which he prefixed a preface, and a very ingenious, handsome one it is. And also took a deal of pains to furnish libraries in Scotland, and in the private academies in England, with old books; and to supply young students, who were poor, with such books as were proper for them: a great deal of money he laid out himself, out of the little he had, and a great deal more he procured from others, for this good purpose. He knew what books were useful, and how to buy them at the best hand, and by his activity herein, many valuable pieces that otherwise would still have lain buried in dust and cobwebs, have been

sent into hands that are daily making good use of them.

His pious zeal herein extended itself beyond the seas, as appears by the abstract of a letter which is found among his papers, from that great and good man, Monsieur Frank, Professor at Hall in Saxony, wherein he acknowledges to have received the Polyglot Bible from Mr. Stretton, as a present to their library there, and returns his most hearty thanks to so good a benefactor.

He was very forward to encourage youths that he saw or heard to be ingenious and well disposed, and to assist them in their education for the ministry: he kept up a correspondence for this purpose with the universities of Scotland, and was instrumental in sending many thither, and procuring assistance there for some who needed it.

He buried his dear wife in the year 1695, and by her he had left only one son living, who has been many years useful in the ministry.

About the year 1707, the infirmities of age grew upon him, occasioned by a bad fall he had as he was returning to his house, after preaching on a public fast-day, in which exercise he had exceeded his strength; yet he continued doing good to the last, and the spirit was as willing as ever, even when the flesh was weak, and not only weak, but much pained. When he could scarce set one foot before another, yet he would attend the lecture at Salters Hall, and the meeting for charitable contributions, very sedulously, though at a great distance from his house; and but a little before he died, when he was so weak and ill that he could scarce mind any thing else, yet he stirred up himself to give advice and direction in an affair of charity, wherein his assistance had been much depended upon.

He kept up his public work, though he struggled with much difficulty in it, till within ten weeks of his death; and often took notice of it with thankfulness to God, that though for some time before he was confined to his house all the week, yet till May 4, 1712, he had strength on the Lord's day to go to his meeting-place and preach once, and administer the Lord's supper every month.

In his last illness, he expressed a cheerful resignation of himself to the will of God, an entire dependence upon the grace of Christ, and a believing, comfortable expectation of the glory to be revealed.

Some of his sayings in his weakness have been mentioned in the foregoing sermon, and need not to be repeated.

He finished his course, and fell asleep in the Lord, on Thursday, July 3, 1712, and was buried the Monday following in the burying-place in Bunhill-fields. *There the weary are at rest.*

# A SERMON

PREACHED UPON OCCASION OF

# THE DEATH OF THE REV. DANIEL BURGESS,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

WITH A CONCISE ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE.

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2 CORINTHIANS iv. 7.

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

DIVINE Providence has in the mournful occasion of this solemnity given us a sensible proof of the truth contained in the former part of my text, that *we have the heavenly treasure in earthen vessels;* for here is one of those vessels broken and laid by, by which it appears to have been, though a strong one, yet an earthen one. And now, O that divine grace would, by its sanctifying quickening influences upon all our hearts, verify the latter part of the text, and give us a proof, that notwithstanding this, there is an *excellency of power* going along with the gospel of Christ, which depends not upon dying men, but upon a living God; and is mighty through him to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin, and the setting up of stronger for Christ, that he may divide the spoil, and possess the throne in the soul! And if we have experience of this, that though faithful ministers are removed one after another, yet the Spirit of the Lord is not departed from us, it will be our best support and comfort under all afflictions of this kind; for though our ministers have their strength weakened in the way, and their days shortened, yet Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the same to his church. They are wearied and worn out, and are gone where the weary are at rest; but the *everlasting God, even the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary;* so that, thanks be to God, still we have the treasure, and if it be not our own fault, may make it ours, though still we have it in earthen vessels.

1. By the treasure here spoken of, it is plain we are to understand the gospel of Christ, the glorious gospel of the blessed God, in which is set before us, and offered to us, the unsearchable riches of Christ. It is this treasure, which the apostle's heart was so much upon, and so full of: this, which in the verse before he had called *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.* That is the treasure which we Christians have, and glory in. And a noble description it is of the everlasting gospel which is preached to us, and professed by us.

It is light: it is such a light as in the dawning of the day of the creation shone out of darkness, when the Almighty said, *Let there be light*, and was the first-born of this visible world: it is such a light as every morning shines out of the darkness of the night, that, as the gospel did, it may take hold of the ends of the earth, which is turned to it as clay to the seal, Job xxxviii. 13, 14. What is more bright and glorious than the light? what more pure? what more self-evident? and what more welcome to them who sit in darkness? Light is indeed a treasure, and we have it from the Father of lights.

It recommends itself to those who would improve their natural reason; for it gives knowledge, sound knowledge, useful knowledge, the knowledge of duty, the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins; a knowledge infinitely preferable to that which the inquisitive part of mankind amused and perplexed themselves with in the Gentile philosophy, which did but darken counsel by words without knowledge. The light of joy, which the gospel brings, results from the light of knowledge, and that is no Christian devotion which has ignorance for the mother of it.

It recommends itself likewise to those who would improve their natural religion; for it gives the knowledge of the glory of God, the founder and

centre of all religion; it sets that glory before us, as the object both of all our adorations, and of all our aims. The heavens indeed declare the glory of God, but they show us not how and which way we may glorify him, much less be glorified with him: here, therefore, where natural reason and religion both leave us at a loss, the gospel of Christ takes us up, and leads us on, shows us the glory of God shining in the face of Christ, where it shines clearer, and stronger, and brighter, and with more satisfaction, than it does in the face of the whole creation; for it declares the glory of God reconcilable to us, and accessible by us, nay, and in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and taking a remnant of the children of men into covenant and communion with himself through a mediator; in it life and immortality are brought to light, are brought to hand. Such a knowledge as this well deserves to be called a *treasure*, and it is this treasure here spoken of.

2. By the earthen vessels here, it is plain we are to understand the apostles and the ministers of the gospel, here in their present state, while they are in the body. We have this treasure lodged with us for the use of others, whose bodies are as earthen vessels. These were the gifts Christ gave unto men when he ascended up on high; (and valuable gifts indeed, if we consider the treasure lodged in them;) not only prophets and apostles, but pastors and teachers, whose office and business it is, to preach the glad tidings of redemption, by the Redeemer's offering himself to be a sacrifice for us, and a Saviour to us.

The very same gospel that was preached by the apostles and evangelists then, is preached by the pastors and teachers still; only the business of the first preachers of the gospel was to propagate it to distant nations, to carry it from place to place, that Christ might be known as salvation to the ends of the earth. The business of the pastors and teachers since has been, rather to propagate it to succeeding generations, to carry it from age to age, that *the name of* Christ *might endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.* The former was intimated in the command, *Go, disciple all nations;* the latter in the promise, *Lo, I am with you always,* with you and your successors, *even to the end of the world,* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

Now those who are employed in this work are here said to be *earthen vessels*; we have it *εν οστρακινοις σκευεσι—in vessels made of shells of fishes,* so the learned Dr. Hammond thinks it might be read; the shells of oysters, (which have their name from the word here used,) and other the like, resemble our bodies, in which our souls dwell as a fish in the shell, and are fastened to them; and he observes from Grotius, that the Platonists making two bodies of a man; one more inward, which the soul was immediately lodged in, which they called Οχημα ψυχης—*the chariot or vehicle of the soul,* an aerial body; the other, which is terrestrial, more gross and carnal, which we see and touch, they call Οστρακινον, the word here used, the *shell* of the soul. But he owns that the word signifies likewise an earthen vessel which has passed the fire, and is therefore brittle, and soon broke, such as that earthen bottle which the prophet broke for a sign before the ancients of the people, Jer. xix. 10.

3. The force of the reason why God has been pleased to put such a treasure in earthen vessels, is also plain, *that the excellency of the power may be,* that is, may appear to be, *of God,* and not *of us.* "We carry bodies about us" (so Dr. Hammond paraphrases it) "subject to all manner of oppositions, pressures, and afflictions; and this on purpose designed by God also, that all the good success we have in our apostleship may be imputed to Christ, and not to us, as it would be if we came with any secular power or grandeur to plant the gospel." And a very considerable proof it was of the divine original of the gospel, that though the preachers were not only destitute of all worldly advantages, but laboured under all imaginable disadvantages, yet it made its way, gained its point, and did wonders, which was an evidence that there was an excellency of power above that of any creature going along with it.

Three doctrines we may observe hence:

I. That the gospel of Christ is a treasure indeed, and it is our unspeakable privilege that we have that treasure.

II. Ministers are earthen vessels, in which this treasure is put.

III. That God has put the treasure into earthen vessels, that all who are enriched by it may give him the glory of it.

I. In having the gospel of Christ known and owned among us, we have a treasure truly valuable, nay, invaluable. It is our happiness as Christians, that we have the gospel written to us in the Scriptures, which are of divine inspiration, preached to us by a ministry of divine institution, under the direction of a divine warrant, and the influence of a divine promise, and professed in the world by a church called out of the world, and incorporated by a divine charter.

We live in an age of infidelity, when, under colour of opposing bigotry and enthusiasm, (two very detestable things,) the gospel of Christ is ridiculed and run down, and set upon a level with the pagan theology: *It is time for thee, Lord, to work, when men thus make void thy gospel;* and it is time for us in our places to appear in defence of that which is the foundation of all our hopes, and the fountain of all our joys, when it is thus virulently, thus violently, attacked. It is *pro aris et focis—for our God and our country,* that we contend, when we contend for *the faith once delivered to the saints,* and for the common

salvation, and therefore we ought to contend earnestly. Upright men are astonished to see such sacred truths and laws treated with such contempt, and the innocent cannot but stir up himself against the hypocrite. When they speak slightly of the gospel who hate its laws, and despise its comforts, we ought to speak honourably of it; and how can we speak more honourably of it than to call it, as the text does, our *treasure?* We know it, and believe it to be so, and that, in comparison of it, all the learning and policy of this world is but trash and trifle.

The gospel of Christ is indeed a treasure. For,

1. There is in it an abundance of that which is of inestimable value. If the things themselves be truly precious, and there be plenty of them, then we call them treasure; and such things there are, and such a fulness of them, in the gospel of Christ. As the merchandise and trade of this wisdom, so its stores and treasures, are better than that of silver, or of fine gold, or precious stones. *The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal them, the onyx, or the sapphire,* Job xxviii. 19.

There are treasures of wisdom and knowledge in the truths which the gospel discovers to us, about which the understanding finds the best employment, the best entertainment. There are treasures of comfort and joy in the offers which the gospel makes us, and the blessings it assures to all believers, in which not only the necessities of the soul are well provided for, but its desires abundantly satisfied, and its true and lasting happiness inviolably secured. There is a treasure of merit and righteousness in Christ, and in his mediation, his sacrifice and intercession for us; a treasure of grace and strength in the Spirit, and his operations on us; a *fulness of grace, grace for grace,* grace for all gracious exercises, which it pleased the Father should dwell in Jesus Christ, that thence we might receive.

These are things of value to the soul of man, and which every soul puts a high value upon, that truly desires to know and love its God, to serve him, enjoy him, and be for ever happy in them: things which angels themselves put such a value upon, that they desire to look into them; and which Christ himself put such a value upon, that he thought it worth while to pour out his soul unto death to purchase them for us, since they could not be obtained for gold, nor could silver be weighed for the price of them.

And there is an abundance of them, infinitely exceeding that of light in the sun, or water in the sea. In Christ there is enough of that, of all that, which our souls need; enough for all, enough for each, enough for you and me; enough for as many as will come and take of these waters of life. *Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.* When God entered into covenant with Abraham, (and it was the covenant of grace that he made with him,) he engaged to be to him *El-shaddai,* a God *All-sufficient,* Gen. xvii. 1. a God that is enough. Justly therefore is that gospel which proclaims this covenant called a treasure, for in the most valuable, durable riches it infinitely exceeds the peculiar treasures of kings and provinces. It is an inexhaustible fountain of life and living waters; it is a bottomless treasure; not a treasure in a chest, but a treasure in a mine, continually searched into, but never wasted.

2. This is safely laid up for a perpetuity, and therefore it is a treasure. It is deposited in good hands, whence we may draw from it, but cannot be deprived of it; it is *hid treasure;* not hid *from us,* but hid *for us:* it is a treasure under lock and key, and it is in the hand of Christ that this key of David is. The riches of Christ, which fill those treasures, are unsearchable riches; are such as *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive.*

It is hid in God, in his wisdom and counsel, and that eternal purpose which he has purposed in himself, which can never be altered: it is hid in his glorious perfections, which are all made over to true believers for the constituting and ensuring of their happiness by that all-comprehending article of the New Covenant, *I will be to them a God;* which is treasure enough.

It is hid in Christ, and in his undertaking for us; which contain all that we need as sinners, as God's being to us a God, contain all we need as reasonable creatures. He is the treasurer of this treasure, is intrusted, as Joseph was in Egypt, to dispose of it, as he was to lay it up; and in him it is safe. All the promises of God, which are real treasures, and the best securities, are in him *yea and amen.*

It is hid in the Scripture: there it may be found: thence it may be fetched by faith acting on divine revelation, assenting to it with application and resignation. It is in the parable a treasure *hid in a field,* where it must be digged for; and the Scripture is that field, which we must make ours, and make use of, and then the treasure is ours. The word is nigh us, and Christ in the word.[a] It is hid from the wise and prudent;[b] the worldly wise, who look with contempt upon the field of the Scripture, as Naaman upon the waters of Jordan, preferring before them Abana and Pharpar, *rivers of Damascus;*[c] leaving God's fields for a rock, and for the snow of Lebanon,[d] as the prophet speaks. But it is hid for the humble and holy, the willing and obedient; they have an incontestable, indefeasible title to it: in it they have a portion that is safe, which

[a] Rom. x. 8. [b] Luke x. 21. [c] 2 Kings v. 12. [d] Jer. xviii. 14.

neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal;[e] a good part, which shall never be taken away from them.[f]

It is a treasure; for it is laid up for hereafter. The bulk of these riches is that which is reserved in heaven for us;[g] a glory that is to be revealed in due time. It is a treasure, that will not only suit the present exigences of the soul, but will last as long as it lasts, and run parallel with its never-failing duration. It is an everlasting gospel that is preached to us,[h] that word of the Lord which endures for ever, when all the glory of man is withered as the grass:[i] it is a treasure, which glorified saints will be living plentifully and pleasantly upon to eternity.

3. It is of universal use to us; and therefore it is a treasure. It is not only valuable in itself, but every way suitable and serviceable to us. He who has a treasure has that which answers all things;[k] and that the gospel does: it is accommodated to the case of our souls in all respects; and the riches of God's glory in Christ Jesus, will, as the apostle speaks, *supply all our need.*[l]

In our contemplations, in our devotions, and in our whole conversation in the world, the gospel of Christ is of constant use to us, does that for us which we need, and which nothing else could do for us. We could have no acquaintance or communion with God, but under the conduct and direction of the gospel; no comfortable enjoyment of ourselves, nor peace in our own consciences, but upon gospel grounds; nor any sure rule of speaking and acting, but that which the gospel furnishes us with in the law of Christ; nor any powerful principle of well-doing, but what is wrought by the Spirit of Christ.

It is a treasure of food for all those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is *manna*, bread from heaven; not a pot of manna, but a cloud of manna. The bread which the Son of man shall give, is that which endures to eternal life, is the pledge of it, and nourishes believing souls to it. It is a treasure of physic for diseased souls, that apply themselves to Christ as their physician; and there is in it a salve for every sore, a remedy for every malady. And the universal cures which Christ wrought when he was here upon earth, were an indication of that inexhaustible fulness of healing virtue that there is in the gospel of Christ; as his feeding thousands with a little food, was of the abundant nourishment that there is in it to them who by faith live upon it, to whom his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

It is a treasure of arms and ammunition for our spiritual warfare; a divine magazine, whence the good soldiers of Jesus Christ may be furnished with answers to every temptation, and with the whole armour of God, with which they may not only secure themselves, but resist and vanquish their spiritual enemies, and become more than conquerors.

It is a treasure in the world; it puts honour upon it, and puts good into it. God's love to the world, in sending his only-begotten Son, that through him righteousness and life might be brought in where sin and death had reigned, is the best treasure that ever was in it, far exceeding the riches of the sea, or the treasures hid in the sand. The enlarging of the borders of the church, by the spreading of the gospel, is called the *riches of the world*, the *riches of the Gentiles;* and those parts of the world that have the gospel, have no reason to envy those who have the gold, nor should wish to change with them.

It is a treasure to any nation or people. Those are truly rich among whom the word of Christ's gospel has free course, and is glorified; who have it in its purity, power, and plenty; and Christ in that chariot going forth, and going on, conquering and to conquer. As wisdom and knowledge are the stability of our times, so the fear of the Lord is our treasure. Bibles and ministers are the wealth of a nation; the growth of Scripture knowledge, the increase of the gifts and graces of ministers, their zeal for Christ, and love to the souls of men, may be reckoned the growth of a kingdom's wealth, of its honour, and of its strength.

Let us bless God, that we of this nation, that you of this city, have this treasure, and have it in such abundance; that the gospel of Christ is read, and preached, and professed among us; O that it were more practised and lived up to! The kingdom of God among us is the treasure of our kingdom; let us see that we bring forth the fruits of it, that we receive not the grace of God therein in vain, lest we provoke him to take it from us, and give it to another nation (for some where or other he will find a place for it) that will make a better use of it. Dread the loss of wisdom's merchandise, more than of any trade; of the liberty of the gospel, more than our civil liberties; and deprecate the threatening inundations of atheism and popery, either of which will rob us of this treasure.

It is a treasure in the heart of every true believer who receives it, embraces it, and is delivered into it, as into a mould. If the gospel of Christ has, as it ought to have, the innermost and uppermost place in our souls, if it command us, if it constrain us, and so if we become interested in its promises and privileges, we are rich, and increased with goods, we are truly rich, rich toward God, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. And out of this good treasure in the heart, a good man upon all occasions brings forth good things, for his own use, and for the service of others: as the good householder, so

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[e] Matt. vi. 20. [f] Luke x. 42. [g] 1 Pet i 4. [h] Rev. xiv. 6.
[i] 1 Pet. i. 25. [k] Eccl. x. 19. [l] Phil. iv. 19.

the good scribe, who is well instructed concerning the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, from that treasury produces things *new and old*, to the glory of God's grace and truth.

Let us therefore get our hearts enriched with this treasure, by a true and lively faith in Christ and his gospel: we are wretchedly and miserably poor till we do this; and then, and not till then, we begin to be wise for ourselves. There are many who, through grace, can call God theirs in covenant, Christ theirs, all the benefits of the New Testament theirs. Come, O come, and cast in your lot among them; receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and give up yourselves to him, to be ruled, and taught, and saved by him; and as you have received him, and resigned yourselves to him, so walk in him; and you have a treasure which will be your heritage for ever, and in the mean time may be the rejoicing of your heart.

II. Ministers are earthen vessels in whom this treasure is put. What is laid up in order to its being used hereafter is laid up in some vessel or other, where it may be ready when there is occasion for it, or to which those who have occasion may have recourse. Now the treasure of the gospel is committed to the preachers of it, as proclamations to the messengers of the government, to be dispersed; and this is like putting a treasure into earthen vessels.

They are said to have this treasure, not only because they ought to have it, in their hearts themselves, firmly to believe it, and to abide under the impressions and influences of it; for how can they expect to be instrumental in bringing others to the belief and obedience of that which they do not themselves believe and obey? but because they have the exhibiting and dispensing of it to others. They have (as the Levites under the law) the *charge of the holy things*, because if there were not some to whom this charge were committed, that which is every body's work would soon be nobody's work. The ministers of Christ are said to be *stewards of the mysteries of God*, and have the keys of the stores committed to them, that they may give to each of the household their portion of meat in due season; it is a dispensation, not a dominion, that is committed to them. The gospel is said to be *committed to their trust*, to the use and behoof of the church of God, and all the members of it; yet, blessed be God, not excluding themselves: their concern, therefore, is to pursue the trust, and to be faithful to it.

The preaching of the gospel is put into their mouths, and they are like John Baptist, the *voice of one crying in the wilderness*, crying as to travellers in a wilderness who have lost their way, and if not called to, will wander endlessly; and they are but the voice, God is the speaker. The applying of the seals is put into their hands, the admitting seal, the confirming seal; by which those are sacramentally invested in the privileges of the gospel, who, by the working of the Spirit on their hearts, are become entitled to them: and thus they have the treasure.

1. They are but *vessels*, that afford no more, no other, than what is put into them, nor can give but just as they have received. God is the fountain of light and life, and living waters, and all our springs are in him: they are as all other creatures are, (angels themselves not excepted,) that, and all that, and that only, that God makes them to be. It is Christ who is the *fountain of gardens*, Cant. iv. 15. they are but *cisterns:* it is the commandment that is the lamp, and the law is light; they are but as candlesticks in which this light is set up, and by which it is held forth.

Ministers must remember this, and religiously adhere to their instructions; and as they must dare to declare the whole counsel of God, so they must not dare to declare any thing else under the name and shadow of that; but must be able to say, *we have received from the Lord that which we have delivered unto you;* for a man can receive nothing which he can depend upon himself, or recommend to others with any assurance, unless it be given him from above. You like not the liquor that tastes of the vessel; nor will a gracious soul relish the doctrine that is of man, and by man. It is the *pure river of water of life, clear as crystal*, which *proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb*,[m] that waters the New Jerusalem, and makes it glad.

People must remember this, and not expect any more from their ministers than from vessels: we have a gospel to *preach*, not a gospel to *make:* we can but *declare* the grace of God, we cannot *bestow* that grace; and therefore why look ye at us, as if we could speak to the heart? What is Paul, or what is Apollos?[n] They are but ministers, not masters; they can but prophesy upon dry bones, but to no purpose, unless a spirit of life from God enters into them; they are but like Gehazi with Elisha's staff, or Elisha with Elijah's mantle; it is the Lord God of both who must do the work.

2. They are but *earthen vessels*. It was agreeable enough to the external glory of the Old-Testament dispensation, that the lights of the sanctuary should be put into golden candlesticks, of pure gold; but the glory of the New Testament being spiritual, the exhibiting of the light of that is in earthen lamps, like Epictetus's. Some think here is an allusion to Gideon's soldiers, who, advancing to battle in the night, took lamps in their earthen pitchers, with the glaring light of which, upon breaking the pitchers, the enemy was terrified, and so discomfited.[o] By such unlikely methods is Christ's cause carried on, and yet is victorious.

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m Rev. xxii. 1. n 1 Cor. iii. 5.

o Judg. vii. 16.

Let us see why the ministers of the gospel are here compared to earthen vessels.

(1.) They are made of the same mould with other people. All the children of men are earthen vessels: the body is the vessel of the soul, and it is of the earth, earthy; and ministers are partakers of flesh and blood, as other men are, hewn out of the same rock, and digged out of the same hole of the pit.

God has not sent us his gospel by those messengers of his who are spirits, and a flame of fire, but by such as have bodies, and are *clods of clay*, and *worms of the earth*, as those are to whom they are sent: they are to you in God's stead indeed, and their embassy is high and honourable; but, as Elihu speaks, they also are formed out of the clay; and God, in compassion to us, chooses to speak to us by men like ourselves, because their terrors shall not make us afraid, as those of angels would, if God should send his errands to us by them; nor shall *their hand be heavy upon us*.

St. Paul has an earthly house, which he expects the dissolution of, and finds already in the dissolving; and St. Peter a tabernacle, which he knows he must shortly put off, though they were both great apostles, and one of them had been in the *third heavens*, and the other in the *holy mount*. And it is not only an honour put upon the human nature, that God is pleased to commit the ministry of reconciliation to those of that nature, but an encouraging token of God's favour and good-will to us, and an evidence to us that he is in earnest in the embassy of peace; for if the Lord had been pleased to kill us, he would not have showed us such things as these, much less would he have showed them us by those who are our bone and our flesh, who belong to that world which he has justly a quarrel with.

We are not only children of men, as you are, but we are by nature (blessed Paul puts himself into the number) children of wrath, even as others, guilty and corrupt, and as certainly ruined and undone, without a Saviour, as any of you. We are making the same complaints that you are, and groaning under the same burthens. We have the same need of the merit of Christ for our justification, and of his Spirit for our sanctification, that you have. We will never lay any other yoke upon your necks, but what we desire to submit our own to; nor wish you to embark for another world in any other vessel, but what we desire to venture ourselves and our own salvation in. We would deal for your souls as for our own; for your case is ours; and therefore the priests were taken from among men, that they might deal tenderly with men, Heb. v. 1, 2.

(2.) They are oftentimes, in respect of their outward condition, mean and low, and of small account, as earthen vessels are; not only *men*, but *men of low degree, sons of earth*, as the Hebrew phrase is. Their family, perhaps, like Gideon's, poor in Manasseh, and they the least in their father's house,[p] who have nothing distinguishing in their extraction or parentage, their birth or education; they have reason to rejoice (as Christ tells his disciples) that *their names are written in heaven*, but they must never expect to have a name like the names of the great ones of the earth.

The first preachers of the gospel were poor fishermen, earthen vessels indeed, bred up to the sea, and before they were intrusted with this treasure, were unlearned and ignorant men.[q] Christ's kingdom not being of this world, he did not make use of the princes of this world, not men of honours and estates, not their learning or politics; but as the poor received the gospel, so the poor preached it.

And still they are not many mighty, not many noble, who are called to this work; it is honourable enough itself, and needs not borrow any additional lustre from the glory of this world, which God would thus put contempt upon, and give more abundant honour to that part which lacked, as the apostle speaks with reference to the dispensing of spiritual gifts. The poor in the world are often made rich in faith, rich in the gospel treasure.

(3.) They are subject to many infirmities, to like passions as other men, and upon that account they are earthen vessels; they have their faults, their flaws, their blemishes, as earthen vessels have. John Baptist takes notice of it, that it is Christ only, who cometh from heaven, and is above all, who is perfectly pure and spotless; but he *that is of the earth, is earthly, and speaketh of the earth:* the treasure is wisdom from above, it is all heavenly and divine; but the vessel in which it is put, has too much in it of the wisdom from beneath, for it is earthen, and savours of its original.

God has chosen not only the weak, but the foolish, things of the world, by them to carry on his cause, and by them to carry it at last. *The law made men priests who had infirmity*, and so does the gospel too. Jonah was a prophet of the Lord, and yet peevish and passionate, and often out of temper: Elijah himself was so. St. Peter at Antioch was to be blamed, when he went in with Barnabas into a piece of dissimulation;[r] and I doubt St. Paul at Antioch was not altogether to be justified, when he fell out with Barnabas in a heat of contention.[s] There were those who preached Christ, even of envy and strife; and many who sought their own things more than the things of Christ;[t] and yet, as long as they preached Christ, and held forth the gospel treasure, St. Paul rejoiced[v] in it. He was a great apostle, who put himself in, when he said, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves.*

p Judg. vi. 15. q Acts iv. 13. r Gal. ii. 11, 13.

s Acts xv. 39. t Phil. ii. 21. v Phil. i. 15, 18.

Ministers are men, and therefore it cannot be thought they do what they do by their own power; they are sinful men, and therefore cannot be thought to do it by their own holiness. They are pressing toward perfection, but they have not yet attained; they own they have not, they own it to you, and desire you will not think the worse of the treasure that is put into their hands, for any mistake or defect of theirs in other things: you may see a divine excellency in it, though you see much human infirmity in the ves el that keeps it. Bear with them then, and be not severe in judging them, whom you have so often heard going before you in judging themselves.

4. They are made of different sorts of earth, as earthen vessels are; all of the same nature, but not all of the same natural constitution. The bodies of some are of a stronger make, and more cut out for labour, while others are feeble, and soon foiled. *Quies meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan—Some have souls that seem to be made of finer mould than others;* the capacities of their minds more elevated and enlarged; while others, who yet have their hearts upright with God, in comparison with them, are but babes in understanding.

But those of the finest mould, even the china vessels, are but earthen ones; the head and the eye in it are made of the same earth with the rest of the body; and those who are of a coarser mould, yet may as effectually answer the end in keeping the treasure, as those of the finest composition. The living creature in Ezekiel's vision, that had the face of an ox, did as good service in his place, as that which had the face of an eagle.[w] Therefore let not those of eminent gifts be puffed up, they are but earthen vessels; nor let those of meaner abilities be cast down or discouraged, God can make them who seem poor, yet to enrich many.

A great deal of difference there is likewise between some and others of those earthen vessels, in respect of natural temper: some are more bold, others more timorous: some more warm and eager, others more soft and gentle. I remember Gregory, in his book *de pastorali curâ—on pastoral care*, observes, that St. Paul, writing to Timothy, bids him *not strive, but be gentle to all men*, and to reprove *with all long-suffering;* but, writing to Titus, he bids him rebuke sharply, and reprove with all authority; for which he gives this reason: "Titus was a man of a mild disposition, and needed a spur; Timothy more sanguine, and needed a bridle." Some are of a sorrowful spirit, reserved, and inclined to melancholy; and that is turned to their reproach, as it was to David's, when he wept and chastened his soul with fasting, Ps. lxix. 10. and to John Baptist's, who, because he came neither eating nor drinking, not conversing so familiarly with the world as others did, they said, *He has a devil*, he is a crazed, distracted man. Others are of a cheerful spirit, and jocular sometimes, and that shall be made a blemish in their character; as, because Christ came eating and drinking, they called him a *gluttonous man*, and a *wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.*

So likewise, as to the manner of exhibiting and dispensing the treasure, there is a great variety of gifts: Apollos is an eloquent man; but Paul's speech is contemptible, (2 Cor. x. 10.) yet his letters are powerful. Even among the inspired writers there is a great variety of phrase and diction, much more among the other earthen vessels, that are left more to themselves. And all these, as far as they have an aptitude to edify some or other, either the learned or the unlearned, are wrought by one and the self-same spirit; and yet by men of corrupt minds, both the one and the other are exposed to contempt. He who delivers his message, as St. Paul did, in tears, is ridiculed as a whining preacher: he who delivers it now and then with a pleasing, surprising turn, is ridiculed as a facetious one; as Isaiah was bantered for saying, *Precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line,*[x] which in the original is a jingle of words, *Tsaf betsaf, kaf bekaf;* and this made a song of, v. 13. *The word of the Lord was unto them, precept upon precept.* Jeremiah is jeered for saying, *The burthen of the word of the Lord;* and they said of Ezekiel, *Doth he not speak parables?* and yet, after all, laid to their charge a thousand things which they knew not: but wisdom is, and will be, *justified* of all *her children.*

(5.) They are of different shapes and sizes, as earthen vessels, and vessels of shells, used to be; notwithstanding which they may all receive and keep safe, and minister the treasure, according to their different capacities. While they hold the foundation, Christ, and him crucified, and the truth as it is in Jesus, yet in matters of lesser moment, that do not so immediately affect the treasure, there may be a great variety of sentiments, and of practice accordingly.

It was so in the apostle's times: *One believes he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eats herbs: one esteems one day above another, another esteems every day alike.*[y] Both cannot be in the right: yet the apostle interposes not his apostolic authority in the matter to determine it either one way or other; but rather chooses to give a rule, which would be of lasting use to the church, in all differences of that kind, when apostolic authority should cease; and that is, each to practise according to their sentiment, with true devotion to God, giving him thanks, and with true charity toward their brethren; not imposing upon them their own sentiments, no, nor so

[w] Ezek. i. 10. [x] Isa. xxviii. 10. *Per illusoriam μιμησιν verba prophetarum subeunnant.* Grot.

[y] Rom. xiv. 2, 5.

uch as judging and censuring theirs, or judging
id despising them for practising according to them;
iat both sides may reserve their zeal for the weigh-
er matters of the law and gospel, faith in Christ,
id holiness of heart and life.

(6.) They are all what God, the great potter,
akes them; for if they are earthen vessels, they
e in his hand, as the clay in the hand of the potter,
ho has a sovereign power over them; and it is not
be asked, *Why hath he made them thus?* The wise
od knows what he designs men for, and what use
e will make of them, and fashions their hearts ac-
ordingly: *Before I formed thee in the belly*, says
od to the prophet, *I knew thee*, and knew what
ervice I would employ thee in, and formed thee
ccordingly, fitted thee to be a *weeping* prophet in
alamitous times.[z] As God intrusts talents with his
ervants according to the ability[a] he has given them,
o he gives them ability according to the talents he
esigns to intrust them with.

Therefore we ought not to envy the gifts of those
who excel and eclipse us; for may not God do what
e will with his own? Nor should we be discouraged,
hough our capacity be small, our faculties weak,
nd the sphere of our activity low and narrow; if
ve be faithful in the little we are intrusted with, and
diligent to improve it, it may be our comfort, that it
s the place which God has seen fit to put us in;
nd where he has given but one talent, he expects
he improvement but of one, for he is not a hard
Master.

(7.) They are all vessels of use and service in the
family, though they are but earthen ones. The apostle
observes, that in a great house, there are not only
vessels of gold and silver, (the angels who are God's
ministers in the upper world, and employed in this,
are vessels of gold and silver, vessels of honour,)
but there are also vessels of wood and earth, which
are comparatively vessels of dishonour:[b] but it does
not therefore follow, that they are no part of the
furniture of God's house: *If the feet shall say, 'Be-
cause I am not the hand, or the ear shall say, Because
I am not the eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore
not of the body?*[c] God knows how to make use even
of earthen vessels, how to make them truly beautiful
and valuable, by putting a treasure into them, which
may be and must be received from them, and use
made of it.

(8.) They are oftentimes despised and trampled
upon by men, notwithstanding the honour God has
put upon them, and are thrown by as despised broken
vessels, and vessels in which is no pleasure. So
this similitude of the earthen vessels is explained
here, in the following verses; where the apostle
shows, that he called himself and his fellow-apostles
earthen vessels, because they were *troubled on every
side, perplexed, persecuted, and cast down;*[d] and be-
cause they past by so much *dishonour and evil report
as deceivers*, and *unknown*, though they were true
and well known.[e]

It has often been the lot of some of the most faith-
ful, useful ministers of Christ, to be loaded with
reproach and calumny, to be exceedingly filled with
the scorning of them who are at ease, and the con-
tempt of the proud, and to have all manner of evil
said against them falsely. Thus the precious sons
of Zion, comparable to fine gold, and every way
preferable, have been esteemed as earthen pitchers,
the work of the hands of the potter.[f] Our Lord
Jesus himself was one whom men despised, whom
the nation abhorred,[g] *and the disciple is not better than
his Lord;* and Satan finds his account in it, for by
casting dirt upon the earthen vessels, he prejudices
the minds of people against the treasure that is put
into them. "But" (as I remember Archbishop
Tillotson somewhere expresses it) "it is no dis-
paragement to be laughed at, but to deserve to be
so; nor ought we to think the worse of the food at
Christ's table, because it is not served up in plate,
but in earthen vessels."

(9.) They are frail, and mortal, and dying, and
upon that account they are earthen vessels. Thus
the apostle explains it here, *We which live are always
delivered unto death.* They are dying daily, and yet
this is so far from being any allay to the rejoicing
which they have in Christ Jesus our Lord, that the
apostle protests the truth of it by that rejoicing, as
a thing of unshaken certainty. These earthen ves-
sels are soon broke, and return to their earth; they
must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the
ground, which cannot be gathered up again; but,
blessed be God, the treasure in them is not so: the
word of the Lord abides, but the prophets do not
live for ever.[h]

They are worn out with their labours; and as they
spend, they are spent, in the service of Christ and
souls. They are subject to the same decays of
nature, the same distempers of body and mind, the
same accidents, and the same infirmities of age, as
others: they are cisterns at the best, and will shortly
be broken cisterns; flowers at the best, and will
shortly be withered flowers. *I have said ye are gods*,
but *ye shall die like men*, for ye are earthen vessels.

Ministers are workmen, and they shall accomplish
as a hireling their day; and having patiently borne
the burthen and heat of it, shall be called in by the
shadows of the evening to receive their penny, and
enter into their rest: they are watchmen, and when
they have staid their time shall be relieved; they are
soldiers, and their warfare will shortly be accom-
plished; witnesses, and their testimony will be
finished; they are Christ's ambassadors, and will be

[z] Jer. i. 5. [a] Matt. xxv. 15. [b] 2 Tim. ii. 20.
[c] 1 Cor. xii. 15, 16. [d] 1 Cor. xii. 8–10.
[e] 1 Cor. vi. 8, 9. [f] Lam. iv. 2.
[g] Isa. xlix. 7. [h] Zech. i. 5.

recalled, and an exchange made. This is not the world that ministers and people are to be together in. O that the one in preaching, the other in hearing, and both in praying, would look upon themselves and one another as dying! that what their hands find to do therein, they may do with all their might!

III. God has put the treasure of the gospel into earthen vessels, that the divine power which goes along with the gospel may be so much the more glorified. The great design of the everlasting gospel, is to bring men to fear God, and give glory to him; and that he may be the more glorified, those are employed in propagating it, who were least likely for such a purpose, that his strength may be manifested in the weakness of the instruments. He ordains strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, that thereby he may perfect praise; as if this were the perfection of the divine praise, not only to help the weak, but to employ the weak. And he chooses to make use of such, to confound the wisdom of this world, and that he who glories, may glory in the Lord, and give glory to him.

There was an excellency of power going along with the apostles, which appeared to be of God, and not of themselves.

1. To strengthen them for the work they were employed in; to preach down Judaism and paganism, and to preach up the kingdom of a crucified Jesus, was a service that required a far greater strength, both of judgment and resolution, than the apostles had of themselves; so that if they had not been full of power by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts, they could never have spoken, as they did, with that wisdom, which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist; could never have made such vigorous attacks upon the devil's kingdom, nor have gathered in such a large harvest of souls to Jesus Christ. They were in labours more abundant, and yet, like their Master, did not fail nor were discouraged; for though they knew and owned that they were not sufficient of themselves for such a service, yet they found their sufficiency was of God, and they could do all things through Christ strengthening them.

2. To support them under the hardships that were put upon them. Therefore God chose the service of such men as were despised, that he might magnify his own power in keeping the spirit he had made, and made fit for his own use, from failing before him. One would wonder how the apostles kept up their spirits; it was not by any power of their own, but underneath them were the everlasting arms; and when they were *pressed out of measure*, above strength, so that they despaired of life, yet they did not faint, being born up by the power of a God who raises the dead. Then it was, that Christ's strength was made perfect in St. Paul's weakness, when he was enabled not only to bear reproaches, and persecutions, and afflictions for Christ, and to say, *None of these things move me*, but to rejoice that he was counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ; to glory in these tribulations, and even to take pleasure in them. Let it never be said, it was by any power of their own, that the apostles were enabled to bear the shame so boldly, and sorrow so cheerfully, and to die daily, and yet live pleasantly; no, it was according to Christ's glorious power, and by his might, that they were thus strengthened unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.[j]

3. To give them success in that great work to which they were called. The world was to be enlightened with the lamps, and enriched with the treasure, that was lodged in these earthen vessels. By their agency the kingdom of the Redeemer was to be set up upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom, the stream of the world was to be turned, the sea must be made to fly, and Jordan must be driven back: this work must be done; and therefore such earthen vessels shall be made use of in the doing of it, that it may appear, that the victorious power that does it, is not that of the apostles, but that it is a divine power; it is not what they have wrought, but what God has wrought by them to make the Gentiles obedient;[k] it is mighty through God, to the casting down of imaginations,[l] and the captivating of high thoughts. The gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation,[m] and in that, as in his chariot, the exalted Redeemer goes forth conquering, and to conquer.[n]

O the wonderful achievements of the gospel! the trophies of its victory over the powers of darkness! the numerous instances of its convincing, converting, sanctifying power! How many sinful hearts have by it been made to tremble, and how many gracious souls to triumph! Had the preachers of it been princes or politicians, had they been philosophers or orators, this success would have been attributed to them; but when they are such despicable men, and so despised, men who, like their Master, were of no reputation, it must be owned, that therefore so many are brought to believe their report, because the arm of the Lord is revealed to them.

Now, for the application of this,

1. Let us see how this Scripture is this day fulfilled, in the removal of the master of this assembly from its head. The gospel treasure was faithfully dispensed here; but hereby it appears to have been put into an earthen vessel, that the vessel is broke, and is returned to the earth out of which it was taken. We are here bewailing the death of a minister of Christ, who was intrusted with the gospel treasure, was enriched with spiritual gifts, and has been

j Col. i. 11. k Rom. xv. 18. l 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. m Rom. i. 16. n Rev. vi. 2.

in his day instrumental, through the grace of God, to make many rich. But he has finished his course.

My personal acquaintance with him was small, and therefore I wished, and laboured, that this service had been put into the hands of some other person, every way better able to do him justice; but since it is thrust into my hands, I think I need not study to do any other honour to his memory, than to take notice of the honour God has done to his ministry, in blessing it to the conversion and edification of many precious souls; which I find there are multitudes ready to bear their testimony to; who, though they have had many instructors in Christ, have called him their spiritual father; for under his preaching, the grace of God has turned them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; and those who have been effectually called, he has been many ways instrumental to build up in their most holy faith. And this I know, there were many very judicious Christians, and who had spiritual senses exercised to discern things that differ, to whom his praying and preaching were both very acceptable and very serviceable, and who sat down under his shadow with delight; yet none more mindful than he, that he was an earthen vessel. An instance of which comes to my thoughts; I once saw a letter from him, to which, instead of his name, he subscribed himself "dust and ashes." Now if those who have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, are to be esteemed very highly in love for their work's sake, much more are they to be so esteemed, who have obtained this further mercy, to be successful for the sake of the fruit of their labours.

Two things he was an eminent example of:

(1.) Great industry and courage in his work, while his health and strength were continued to him. It is a great blessing to any man to have a good constitution of body, and especially to a minister, and is a great talent, that must be accounted for. Such a one he had, and made a good use of it; for he laboured more abundantly, on Lord's days, on week days, *in season, and out of season*, and was in his element when he was in his work. He took pains in preparing what he preached, and then took pains in delivering it, and did not think that either one would excuse the other; either that if a sermon was well studied, it was no matter how dully and carelessly it was preached; or that if it were preached with liveliness, it was no matter how slight and superficial the preparation was: no, he knew, that they who are made fishers of men, have need to mind their business, both when they are fishing, and when they are mending their nets.

You who knew fully his doctrine and manner of life, remember with what unwearied vigour he went on in his work for many years; how he went from strength to strength, and his bow was renewed in his hand; with what courage and holy contempt he looked upon the reproach of men, and their revilings, and like the prophet, *set his face as a flint*, for the advancing of serious godliness. And he found that in waiting on the Lord he renewed his strength, and therefore would not hearken to those who suggested, *Master, spare thyself*. Those who are enabled to do thus have reason to be thankful; while those who are not may yet be very useful, and ought not to be discouraged, since God requires, and will accept and bless, according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not. So much was his heart upon his work, that he complained of being too much hindered in needed and desired ministrations, in which he would willingly give his pains, as that which was a great grief and burthen to him, I have reason to think, that which at length sunk his spirits, and broke his strength, was not so much his working as his not working.

(2.) Great cheerfulness and holy confidence, when he saw the day of death approaching. Many who are very gay and pleasant while they are well, and in health, when they come to be sick, when painful threatening distempers grow upon them, when they find death working in them, and that they are already taken into the custody of its messengers, how are they cast down, and how is their countenance fallen! But it was not so with him: the cheerfulness of his spirit being founded on a good basis, continued to the last, and he walked through the valley of the shadow of death, as one who even there feared no evil.[o]

He looked back with comfort upon all the way in which the Lord his God had led him in this wilderness,[p] and encouraged his family to trust in God and his providence, from the experience which he had had of God's goodness to him, and particularly in the abundant kindnesses he received from his friends, now in his last illness, which he had a very grateful sense of, and for which he gave thanks to God.

He looked forward with comfort upon a blessed state on the other side death. When he found nature sensibly decaying, he said to some of his friends, "Well, if God has any more work for me to do, he can repair these decays, and will do it; and if not, blessed be God, I have a good home to go to, and this is a good time to go home."

A little before he died, he said to those about him, he had four props, which he staid himself upon, and that he found them firm, and they did not sink under him when he leaned on them: 1. "The incarnation of Christ, and his taking our nature upon him." 2. "His oblation of himself a sacrifice for our sins." 3. "His resurrection from the dead for our justification." And, 4. "The intercession which he ever lives

[o] Ps. xxiii. 4.

[p] Deut. viii. 2.

to make for all that come to God by him." These he resolved to rest upon. Thus to him to live was Christ, and to die gain. Christ was all in all to him. Thus, thus he ventured into the invisible world, thus embarked for eternity in the never-failing vessel of Christ's mediation, as a poor sinner in the arms of an all-sufficient Saviour: and it is the excellency of our holy religion, that it furnishes us with living comforts in dying moments, and enables us to triumph over death and the grave, as those who through Christ are more than conquerors.

2. Let us see what improvement we may make of the truth contained in this text, and confirmed by this providence, that we have the gospel treasure in earthen vessels.

(1.) It may be many ways instructive to us who are ministers, and may remind us of our duty.

[1.] Are we earthen vessels? Then we have reason to be very humble, and low in our own eyes, and to take great care that we never think of ourselves above what is meet, but always think soberly. Let us watch over our own spirits, that we harbour not any conceit of ourselves, or confidence in ourselves, or contempt of our brethren, remembering what we are. We are but vessels, and have nothing that is valuable but what we have received, and are intrusted with; and if we have received it, and received it but in trust, why then do we boast?[q] or what have we to boast of? We are no more, no better, that what the free grace of God makes us every day.

We are of the earth, and therefore it becomes us to abase ourselves before God, and to put our mouth in the dust, and acknowledge ourselves unworthy to speak to, or speak from, the Lord of glory.[r] We are of the same mould with others, and therefore ought to condescend to the meanest of the flock of Christ for their good; and to be so far from *lording it over God's heritage*, as to make ourselves the servants of all, as being less than the least of all saints, and the meanest creatures that ever called God Father.

[2.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us not be indulgent of our bodies, nor of their ease, or appetites. What needs so much ado about an earthen vessel, when after all our care and pains about it we cannot alter the property of it, but brittle it is still, and must inevitably be broken after a while. Let not this earthen vessel be enshrined, and made an idol of, nor the belly made a god of; but let it know its place, let it be kept under, and brought into subjection,[s] and kept employed as a servant to the soul in the service of God: our principal care must be about the treasure, duly to dispense that, and about the vessel, only in order thereunto. We then, indeed, make much of our bodies, it is the most we can make of them, when we make use of them as instruments of righteousness to God's honour.

[3.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us not be empty vessels. A vessel of gold or silver is of considerable value, though it be empty; but an earthen vessel, if empty, is good for little, but is thrown among the lumber. Let us get our hearts replenished with the gospel-treasure, with sanctifying grace for our own benefit, and with spiritual gifts for the benefit of others. Let us be filled with the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, filled with the Scriptures, filled with devout affections and holy dispositions, that we may be thoroughly furnished for every good word and work; and, in order hereunto, let us give attendance to reading, to meditation; and, as long as we live, be still improving and adding to our stock, that we may bring forth things new as well as old; and it may appear, though we are still spending, we have still, by the blessing of God on our studies, fresh supplies.

[4.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us be clean vessels. It is enough, that as earthen we are mean by nature, we cannot help that, but let us not make ourselves vile by sin. Let us possess these earthen vessels in sanctification and honour,[t] as temples of the Holy Ghost, which it is sacrilege to pollute: the bodies of all Christians are so, much more the bodies of ministers, with whom the gospel treasure is lodged, who are therefore concerned to keep themselves unspotted from the world and the flesh, lest if, like Eli's sons, they make themselves vile, they make even the sacrifices of the Lord to be abhorred,[u] as good food is in a dirty vessel. If they must be clean who bear the vessels of the Lord,[v] much more must they be so who are themselves his vessels. Let our conversation be with all purity,[w] nor let any blot of any kind cleave to our hands: let us carefully avoid filthy lucre, and every filthy lust, every thing that looks like it, and leads to it. And since it is our business to compass God's altar,[x] let us, with the priests under the law, frequently wash in the gospel laver. Lord, *not my feet only, but also my hands, and my head*,[y] and my heart.

[5.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us take heed of dashing one against another; for nothing can be of more fatal consequence than that to earthen vessels, no, nor to the treasure that is deposited in them. It is not only the duty of ministers, in conformity to the design of their ministry, to be at peace among themselves, but it is their interest; for if they clash with one another, both sides are in danger of being broken: no better can come of it, when the *potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth*.[z] They who think, because they are stronger vessels they can crush the weaker, should remember they are still

q 1 Cor iv. 7. r Gen. xviii. 27. s 1 Cor. ix. 27. t 1 Thess. iv. 4. u 1 Sam. ii. 17.

v Isa lii. 11. w 1 Tim. v 2 x Ps. xxvi. 6. y John xiii. 9. z Isa. xlv. 9.

but earthen ones, and it may prove a crush to themselves.

What if some, according to the light God has given them, stand up for a Christian liberty, in those things wherein others, according to the light God has given them, yield a Christian obedience, since there are those on both sides who do it unto the Lord, and give God thanks,[a] why should they judge or set at nought each other? They are both earthen vessels, that have their infirmities, and seeing through a glass darkly, may be mistaken;[b] why should they not bear with one another, strengthen the hands of one another, since they both are intrusted with that treasure which *consists not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*[c]

Let us therefore study the things which make for peace, and unite our zeal against popery, that common enemy; for if God, for our sins, should suffer that to prevail against us, it will be a rod of iron to break in pieces all these potter's vessels: and we cannot do it better service, than to quarrel among ourselves; for if we bite and devour one another, we shall soon be consumed one of another,[d] at least so far as to become an easy prey to that great devourer.

[6.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us bear contempt and reproach with patience, and not think it strange, or fret at it. It would contribute very much to the quiet and repose of our own minds, if we could but learn *spernere se sperni,—to despise being despised*, and not to be disturbed or moved by it. Now those who overvalue themselves, cannot easily bear to be undervalued by others; let us therefore, not only by keeping a good conscience, have this to say, to those who think and speak ill of us, that it is false and unjust, and our hearts condemn us not; but by keeping the grace of humility in its strength and exercise, have this to say, to those who think and speak slightly of us, that they cannot have a meaner opinion of us than we have of ourselves, nor lay us lower before men, than we lay ourselves every day before God. What else can earthen vessels expect, but to be despised and thrown under foot? Let us make sure the honour that comes from God, and then reckon it a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment.[e]

[7.] Are we earthen vessels? Then let us often think of being broken and laid aside, and prepare accordingly. We are in use for a while, and it is our honour and delight to be employed in the service of Christ and souls. But what is our strength, that we should hope to be long thus employed? *And what is our end, that we should* expect to *prolong our life? Is our strength the strength of stones? or is our flesh of brass?*[f] No, we are earthen vessels, and are hastening to the dust; let us therefore work the works of him that sent us while it is day;[g] let us fill up our time with that which will turn to some good account or other, and improve all our opportunities of doing good, though it be in the lowest sphere of usefulness, as those who know and consider the day of our service is hastening off, and the day of our account is hastening on. Let us follow our work with vigour and resolution, that at length we may finish our course with joy and honour; in a believing expectation, that these earthen vessels, though sown, as you have seen, in weakness, dishonour, and corruption, shall shortly be raised in power, and glory, and incorruption; these *vile bodies*, made like *Christ's glorious one, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue al things to himself*, that in glory, as well as grace, the excellency of the power may be of him.

(2.) This doctrine may be of use to you all. Are your ministers earthen vessels?

[1.] Thank God for the gospel treasure, though it be put into earthen vessels; nay, thank God that it is in such vessels, that it may be the nearer to you, and the more within your reach; and give all diligence to make sure your interest in this treasure. What will it avail us, that we have the gospel in our land, if we have it not in our hearts, that we have the sound of it about us, if we have not the savour of it within us? that we have Bibles in abundance in our houses, and in our hands, if we have not a Bible religion reigning in our souls?

You are laying up treasures of this world's wealth, it may be; O that you would be so wise for your souls and eternity, as to lay up for yourselves that treasure, which will make you rich towards God! which will send you rich out of this world, when death will have stripped you of all your possessions and enjoyments here.

[2.] Esteem the earthen vessels for the treasure's sake that is put into them; esteem them highly in love, as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God;[h] and as such make use of them, and show respect to them. The greatest honour and pleasure you can do them, is to draw from the treasure that is put into them, in your profiting by their ministrations, and making your profiting to appear. As far as you find they deliver Christ's errand, receive it and them for his sake.

And since they are earthen vessels, do all you can to strengthen their hands in their work, to forward it, and to further the success of it; and take heed of doing any thing to discourage them. Throw not those vessels to the ground hastily, because in something or other they do not please you; for remember, they are earthen vessels, and they are your own. They who by their loose and irregular walking, or by their unruliness or peevish strifes, sadden the hearts

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[a] Rom. xiv. 6. [b] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.
[c] Rom. xiv. 17. [d] Gal. v. 15.
[e] 1 Cor. iv. 3. [f] Job vi. 11, 12.
[g] John ix. 4. [h] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

of faithful ministers, do more than they think of toward the hindering of their work, and the shortening of their days, and perhaps will have a great deal to answer for shortly.

[3.] Bless God that the breaking of the earthen vessel is not the loss of the heavenly treasure. Ministers die, but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and a seed of ministers shall be raised up to preach it, and a seed of Christians to profess it, both which shall be accounted unto the Lord for a generation.[i] Ministers hold forth this light, but it shall not die in their hands; they hold this treasure, but it shall not be buried in their graves; for though we see the end of the conversation of those who have spoken to us the word of God, have seen their exit, and shall see them no more, yet we are sure that *Jesus Christ* is *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*[k]

And therefore, since Christ has provided that there should be a succession of these earthen vessels, why should not you look out accordingly? Apply yourselves to him who has the residue of the Spirit, and who holds the stars in his right hand, and attend his conduct.

[4.] Let the glory of all the benefits you have, or may have, by the ministry of the gospel, be given to God, to him only, to him entirely; for from him the *excellency of the power is.* No praise is due to us, we have a great deal in ourselves to be ashamed of, and nothing to boast of, nothing to trust to; the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him for employing us in his service, and enabling us for it: and therefore let every crown be cast at the feet of free grace, and every song sung to the humble strain, (Ps. cxv. 1.) *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*

[5.] Let the consideration of the frailty and mortality of your ministers quicken you to make a diligent improvement of their labours, while they are continued with you. You have the treasure in earthen vessels, therefore delay not to make it yours, lest the vessels that are most likely to convey it to you, should break, and others such should not be raised up, and so you come short of it. *Behold, now is the accepted time*, therefore put not off the great work you were sent into the world about to a further time, but *to-day, while it is called to-day*, hear the voice of Christ and heed it. *Yet a little while is the light with you*, therefore walk and work while you have the light.[l] He who will not send to you by a messenger from heaven, will not send to you by a messenger from the grave: if you believe not Moses and the prophets, your ministers, when once laid in the dust, shall be no more reprovers to you; nor Samuel be raised from the dead to advise Saul, who would not be advised by him while he was with him. By these, therefore, be admonished now, at length in this your day, to know and understand the things that belong to your peace, lest you despair at the last when they are hid from your eyes.[m]

i Ps. xxii. 30. k Heb. xiii. 7, 8. l John xii. 36. m Luke xix. 42.

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# A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF THE

# LIFE OF THE REV. DANIEL BURGESS.

He was born about the year 1645, at Staines in Middlesex, where his father, Mr. Daniel Burgess, was at that time minister, but afterwards removed to Sutton, in Wiltshire, and then to Collinburn Ducis, in the same county, a very considerable living, I am told, of about 400*l.* per annum; and thence he was turned out by the *Act of Uniformity*, choosing rather to quit it on the fatal *Bartholomew Day*, 1662, than to wrong his conscience; and with what little he had of his own, by the blessing of God, made a shift to maintain and educate a numerous family.

This son of his being looked upon to be a child of extraordinary ability, he sent him, at nine years old, to Winchester school; and, after some time, he was chosen on the foundation, where, as is supposed, he continued till he removed to the university. He was entered Commoner of Magdalen-Hall in Oxford, in *Mich.* term, 1660, when we take him to be but about fifteen years of age; so great was his proficiency. That house then flourished much under Dr. Henry Wilkinson, who was then principal of it, but was turned out by the Act of Uniformity. His tutor was one Mr. Northmore, a Devonshire man, of great note for piety and learning, and an acute disputant.

One who was his contemporary in Magdalen-Hall, gives us this account of him, that he was observed to be a very close hard student, and his demeanour in the house was, in all respects, very good.

He continued there till he was Bachelor's standing; but then he and some others his contemporaries

in the same house, (Mr. Brice and Mr. Cudmore,) scrupling something that was required of them for their degree, as I am informed, chose rather to wave taking it, than to submit to the impositions they were then dissatisfied in.

Soon after that he left the university, and went to his father's in the country, and in a little while went to be chaplain to Mr. Foyl, of Chute, in Wiltshire; from thence he moved into the family of Mr. Smith of Tedworth, in the same county, as tutor to his and some other gentlemen's sons. After some years he was courted by the Earl of Orrery, Lord President of Munster, (who was Mr. Baxter's great friend,) to go over with him to Ireland; which he did about the year 1667.

The Earl set up a school at Charlevill for the strengthening of the interest of the protestant religion in that kingdom, and nominated Mr. Burgess the head-master of it. There he had the education of the sons of many of the nobility and gentry of that part of Ireland. After he left that school, he was for some time chaplain to the Lady Mervin, near Dublin.

He was ordained in Dublin, by Dr. Harrison, Dr. Rolls, and some other ministers there. There he married Mrs. Briscoe, by whom he had a son and two daughters.

He continued in that kingdom about seven years; but his father growing infirm, sent for him over to settle near him, which he did in 1674.

He took up his residence at Marlborough in Wiltshire, where he applied himself closely to the work of the ministry, as the difficulty of the times would permit: for he had the courage to put to sea in a storm, and when very few nonconformists did.

He laboured abundantly, and with great success, at Marlborough, and in the parts adjacent, and afterwards preached statedly at Baden, and occasionally at Hungerford, Ramsbury, Alborn, and other places thereabout.

And as he was much followed by those who loved and valued his ministry, so he was greatly persecuted by those who hated it, and much hardship he underwent. Being once taken up for preaching, he was committed to the common gaol, at Marlborough, where he had nothing either to sit down, or lie down, upon, but was forced to walk all night, till next day his friends got a bed in to him at a window. He was likewise denied a copy of his commitment; but after some time he came out upon bail. His prosecutions at assizes and sessions were very expensive to him; and as he laboured, so he suffered, abundantly.

The violence of his prosecutors in the country at length forced him to London, about the year 1685. And there he was when the dissenters had some breathing time allowed them, in 1687, and then he first began to be taken notice of in the city; and some little singularities he had in his preaching, made him to be the sooner and the more taken notice of: and in a little time his hearers were very numerous; and among them divers persons of distinction formed themselves into a society, and took a meeting-place for him in Bridges-street, near Covent Garden: divers of them were the remains of Dr. Manton's congregation thereabouts. There he continued many years.

After that turn of the tide in favour of the dissenters, he was advised by a great man to take his advantage against those in the country, who had prosecuted him beyond the law; but he said, no, he had freely forgiven them, and would never meditate revenge.

He often said he chose rather to be profitable than fashionable in his preaching, and that he thought it cost him more pains to study plainness, than it did others to study fineness; and he would be willing to go out of the common way to meet with sinners, to persuade them to return to their God. "That is the best key (said he) that fits the lock, and opens the door, though it be not a silver or golden one." And many have acknowledged that they came to hear him at first only to scoff at him, and make a jest of what he said, but went away under such convictions about the concerns of their souls, and another world, as, it was hoped, ended in a happy change of their spirits.

In his preaching he insisted mostly upon the first and great principles of religion, which all good Christians are agreed in; and one who was a very competent judge told me, he thought he had as good a faculty in demonstrating them, and making them plain and evident, as most men he ever heard. He much lamented, and vigorously opposed, the growth of deism and infidelity among us, saying, he dreaded a "Christless Christianity." He meddled not with party matters, or matters of doubtful disputation, but plainly made it his aim to bring people to believe in Jesus Christ, and to live in all godliness and honesty. He was particularly careful to explain the two covenants of works and grace, and to guard against the two rocks of presumption and despair.

He was observed to be very serious in prayer, and not to allow himself there such liberties of expression as he sometimes took in preaching.

He had a great dexterity in resolving cases of conscience, abundance of which were brought him from other congregations as well as his own.

He now and then used some plain similitudes, or surprising turns of expression, or little stories, such perhaps as we find Bishop Latimer's sermons full of, (that celebrated preacher and martyr,) which, by some, were turned to his reproach; but it is certain many particular stories were maliciously fathered on him, that were abominably false, and were raised by a lying spirit only to obstruct his usefulness; and in the general he was industriously misrepresented

by many, who it is to be feared therein discovered no kindness for serious godliness. A gentleman having once the curiosity to go to hear him, when he had done, could scarce be made to believe that that was Mr. Burgess; for, said he, "*I never heard a better sermon in my life!*"

His moderation was known unto all men, and he often said he cared not for being distinguished by any denomination, but that of a *Christian of Antioch*.

He was a most agreeable man in conversation, (which is all I can say concerning him of my own knowledge,) very ingenious and pleasant, and his discourse good, and to the use of edifying. He had wit and learning, and could use them aright.

He was much respected by many considerable men; and, like St. Paul, passed by honour and good report, as well as by dishonour and evil report. The excellent Dr. Bates, I am told, had a particular kindness for him.

His delight was much in his study, and there he spent most of the day, and was uneasy when he was interrupted, or called from it, unless it were to do some good office. He went from strength to strength in his work, and chose rather to *wear away* than to *rust away*.

It is well known, he had many very sore trials in the latter end of his time, and some of them went very near him; the unkindnesses, at least apprehended, of some of his friends, much nearer than the insults of his enemies; which yet, said he, "I have never inclined to express my feeling of to any friend save *Eloah, Emanuel* only. But it must and shall be said, to the praise of new-covenant grace, (so he goes on in the paper I have by me,) of never-failing grace; all my nights are not sleepless, all days are not restless, every friend is not found faithless, nor are all enemies found useless; all disturbed studies are not tasteless, all the disadvantageous sermons have not proved fruitless, all the various troubles have not been comfortless, nor the comforts mixed with them successless. Some grapes have been gathered from both sorts of thorns, and the dung, wherewith the tree is so much soiled, it is hoped will make it the more fruitful. Remember what I add, when you see me not, and when I shall be seen no more. I am near home; and, whatever falls on me betwixt this and home, I shall strive myself, and exhort such as you, to maintain a holy gospel alacrity and cheerfulness: because it is most sure, 1. Our God approves it, and requires it in all states. 2. Our Lord Jesus is anointed to give it to us. 3. Our holy infirmity-helper is sent to work it in us. 4. Our dangerous enemy is advantaged by our want of it. 5. It is our spiritual bread, to strengthen us. 6. It is our bright armour, to adorn and defend us. Hereof think you, therefore, in your supplications for yourselves, and for a poor servant of that Lord, whose oblation and intercession we count our best and only riches: content, I hope, (as Luther spake,) to let our names be vilified, so that his name may be hallowed and glorified. I am sure new-covenant grace is cordial, and very supporting; and I hope no day shall pass without my experience thereof."

During his last sickness, which continued some months, and was purely a decay of nature, he had a great composure of mind, and was very much in a heavenly frame. He expressed an entire submission to the divine will, often repeating the words of David: *If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again to see the ark and his habitation; but if not, here I am, let the Lord do with me as seemeth good in his eyes.* He said, if he must work no more, he would rather be "idle under ground, than idle above ground."

His great weakness disabled him from speaking much; but most that he did say was heavenly and profitable. He once said, a little before his death, "I thank God, I have been dying every day in the week. With God is terrible majesty; and that the guilty world will find ere long. Who can dispute an all-knowing God, or evade his charges? But there is a Mediator, an Emanuel. O for a Christ, or else I die! O for that covenanting act to make him ours!

The evening before his death, a friend who came to see him, speaking of public affairs, said, it was feared there would be a storm; he answered with cheerfulness, "But God will house some of his children first." And when he was so weak, that he could scarce speak so as to be understood, he said, "*Well, here is all trouble at the gate; but when got through it, no more, no more.*" And when he seemed to be fainting away, and one of his near relations thereupon cried out, in a fright, when he recovered himself, he asked what was the meaning of that shriek: "*We thought you had been dying,*" said they: "*And what if I had,*" said he, "*what needed that confusion?*" Thus willingly, thus cheerfully, did he enter into the joy of his Lord.

He was buried at St. Clement Danes church, Strand, London, January 31, 1712-13.

The books he published were these: *Soliloquies*, which he printed in Ireland. *Mr. Noah Webb's funeral sermon*, in 1675, when he was in Wiltshire. And after he settled in London: *A call to sinners*; written at the request of Judge Rotheram, for the use of condemned criminals. *Three questions plainly resolved. A discourse of the Lord's Supper. Counsel to the rich*, with an address to King William. *Of reconciliation to God. Characters of a godly man, more or less grown in grace. The Christian decalogue. Hastiness to anger reproved. Directions for reading the word of God profitably. The golden muffers*, the first sermon preached to the societies for reformation of manners. *Holy contention for the faith. Duties of parents and children. Proof of the Scriptures' divine original. Sure way to wealth. Funeral sermons on Mrs. Hook, Mr. Fleming, Dr. Rolls, and the Countess*

*of Ranelagh. A sermon in the morning exercise*, 1689, *concerning the conversion of young people. The most difficult duty made easy: or, directions to bring our hearts to forgive injuries. Foolish talking and jesting described and condemned*, in a sermon on Eph. v. 4. *Rules for hearing the word with certain and saving benefit. Forty aphorisms concerning riches. Poisons and antidotes; the sins whereby poverty tempts; and helpful considerations against them. Mrs. Sarah Bull's funeral sermon. The death and rest, resurrection and blessed portion, of the saints, with the work of the Redeemer and redeemed. Man's whole duty, and God's wonderful entreaty of him thereunto. Advice to parents and children.* And, *a Latin defence of nonconformity*, entitled, *Appellatio ad Fratres Exteros—A call to the expelled brethren.*

# A CONCISE ACCOUNT

OF THE

# LIFE OF LIEUTENANT ILLIDGE,

## FIFTY YEARS IN THE MILITIA OF THE COUNTY OF CHESTER:

CHIEFLY COLLECTED FROM HIS OWN PAPERS.

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Christian Reader,

It is well observed by the wise man, (Prov. xiv. 10.) that the *heart knows its own bitterness*, and its own fears, cares, desires, joys, and hopes, and expectations; that as there is occasion, it is natural and easy to speak or write most feelingly concerning them. These are those *things of a man that no man knoweth, save the spirit of man which is in him*, (1 Cor. ii. 11.) which is therefore called *the candle of the Lord, which searcheth all the inward parts of the belly*, that is, of his own heart, (Prov. xx. 27.) especially when this candle is lighted by the word and Spirit of God. And when a person makes it his business to accomplish a diligent search, doubtless he may arrive at a certain knowledge of his own state and condition, with reference to God and his salvation, by observing the complexion of his own soul from time to time, and looking at himself in the glass of God's law, he may come to know what *manner of man he is*.

The world sees our ways and actions, and is apt to be either too severe on the one hand, or too favourable on the other hand, in their remarks upon them. but as to this, which is the most hidden, and yet most excellent, part of man, the thoughts, the designs, the various workings of the heart, and the secret and solemn transactions between God and it; here a man is best able to draw his own picture: which this good man has done for his own use, in the manuscripts he has left behind him, that he might know (but not with any design to make known to others) what manner of man he was.

What he had done more at large, his friend has in this extract done in miniature, and taken the liberty to show it to the world. This we find done by some, who, for their eminency in gifts, and learning, and station, have made a much greater figure in the church, and in the world; and it has met with good acceptance, and been of use for the assisting, quickening, and warning of others. And we are not without hopes, that this may have the like good effects; that it will not be despised, but be the more acceptable to some, for its plainness and simplicity. as proceeding from an honest farmer, who was a good husband of his time, and was instructed by the grace of God how to cultivate his soul, as well as his ground, and suffer neither to be overgrown with briers and thorns. These thoughts, expressions, prayers, and self-reflections, may suit the case of many others, as well as his; the tradesmen, the farmers, those who are in a public post, the aged and infirm, may here meet with instruction; and especially it may be of use to work in us such a sense of death and eternity as he had, and as, I think, is not common.

I know it will be a surprise to many of his friends, because it represents him to be a better man than, it may be, they took him to be, though, I hope, not a better man than, by the grace of God, he really was. They saw his outside; this shows them his inside: they saw some of his failings, and remember some of his gross sins; here they may see what bitterness they were to him in the reflection. And I cannot but expect, that all good men who loved him, will rejoice and glorify God in him, for the grace given unto him, whereby he was victorious over those foolish and hurtful lusts, to which too many (the more is the pity) still continue in bondage.

*The case reminds me of the apostle's remarks on men's sins and good works*, (1 Tim. v. 24, 25.) Some men's sins are open beforehand, &c. *that is, their sins are some way open*, or they had not come under censure; and their good words must be some way manifest, or they can have no right to absolution: so the learned Dr. Hammond understands the text. Then by good works understand, such are the genuine fruits of an unfeigned faith, and sound repentance: for God pardons and absolves such, and only such, as truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel.

But then, as to those his friends and acquaintance, who have gone a great length with him in sin, but yet are not conscious to themselves of such reflections on themselves as they find in these papers, it does not become me to threaten or judge; but I would with the tenderest compassion warn and exhort them, that they would bethink themselves, as they are reading the following lines, and assure themselves, that there is an eternal difference between good and evil, how industrious soever some may be to confound the ideas of them; and that when they come to die, and enter on their eternal state, they must expect no true peace on any other terms, than those on which, we trust, this good man has both hope and peace: and on these terms, peace be with you. Amen.

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## THE LIFE OF LIEUT. ILLIDGE.

He was born in Weston, in the parish of Wibunbury, in Cheshire; his father was of Cherlton; his grandmother was of the Pools of Blackwell; his grandfather, his father, and himself, had each four sons, and no daughter. His mother was Cecilia, daughter to Mr. Chesnis, of Mickley in Wrenbury parish, who, besides four sons, had seven daughters, who were all married, had children, and died widows.

His father once intended him for the ministry, he having a very good capacity for learning; but neither his father's abilities, nor his own inclination, would permit it. However, he made good proficiency in school learning.

When he was about fifteen years of age, being a younger brother, he was put apprentice to a shoemaker in Nantwich, whom he served faithfully; and it was a comfort to him, in the reflection long after, that he did so. When he was out of his time, he went about to divers cities and towns, to improve himself in his trade. At last he came to London, where he staid about a year; and it was a satisfaction to him in his old age, to be able to say, that in all that time he did not remember that he had neglected the religious observation of one sabbath; and that he did not keep ill company, or haunt ill houses, but delighted in the manly exercises of wrestling, leaping, &c. He was at London at the time of the return of King Charles II. And the spring following came down to Nantwich, married Mary, the daughter of Richard Price, and widow of William Minshul, and set up his trade, which he followed seventeen years.

But his genius led him more to that ancient, innocent, and honourable employment of husbandry, which, he says, was his chief worldly delight; and therefore, when he was about forty years of age, he took a rack-lease of a farm near Nantwich, on which his father and mother lived and died. It was looked upon by some of his friends as a hard bargain. But by the blessing of God, upon his great ingenuity and industry in improving the lands, he lived very comfortably upon it for thirty years, *rejoicing* with *Issachar* in *his tents*. In the first year of his removal into the country, he lost very considerably by suretiship. He said, his father, on his death-bed, gave him much good counsel, to keep the sabbath, to be obedient to his mother and master, and not to take tobacco, (he himself having found great inconveniences by it,) which he had carefully observed; and (said he) if he had given me the same charge against suretiship, it might, perhaps, have prevented that loss.

His father and mother were religious, and brought him up in the fear of God. He relates in some of his papers, that when he was about ten or eleven years of age, there was a solemn fast kept in Nantwich church, upon occasion of a great drought, where his father and the family attended. Divers ministers prayed and preached; but he was particularly affected with a sermon of Mr. Burghal's of Acton; (who was afterwards silenced by the Act of Uniformity;) his opening the evil of sin, and man's misery because of it, brought many tears from his eyes. He had a book written by Mr. Burghal, called "The perfect way to die in peace;" which, when he was old, he delighted much in. After this he betook himself to secret prayer and reading good books, and took pleasure in hearing the word, to which he all along continued a good affection.

After he married, and set up his trade, he was taken into the militia, and continued an officer in it to his death. At the last muster he observed, there was only himself and one more left alive, of about nine score who were in when he entered. He was of a lively, active temper, very bold, and would turn his back on no man, but not abusive or quarrelsome; he loved the soldiers, and they loved him; he took great pleasure in military affairs, and had good judgment in them, which recommended him to the esteem of his superior officers, who loved him.

But this proved a great snare to him; for though he fell not into that height of profaneness that many do, yet he left off to watch and be sober, and for many years lived a vain and careless life; often sitting up till midnight and morning, drinking and mispending his time and money; excusing it to himself, that this was the way to oblige the gentlemen, and get an interest in them, for the promoting of his trade, having but little to begin the world with. His reflections upon this long after are: "Happy, thrice happy, are they, who not only remember their Creator in their youth, but continue to do so from their youth up; which I humbly confess, to my sorrow and shame, that my conversation has

been loose and extravagant; I often ventured wickedly upon sin, against knowledge and conscience, and quenched the Spirit, and neglected the day of visitation. But this I can truly say, it was always with regret and reluctance. I have been a great sinner, but, through grace, a penitent sinner; both my own sins, and the sins of others, were a grief and trouble to me."

The chief thing that induced him to leave off his trade, and retire into the country, was, because he was weary of this evil course of life, and desirous to break off from that company, which he found to be a snare to him; and he found the benefit of it, and walked much more circumspectly afterwards, and kept a more strict watch upon himself. "Such a day," says he, "I unhappily fell into ill company, and, contrary to my inclinations, designs, and resolutions, was overcome by their enticements to drink to excess: a sin I have been often guilty of, and have cause to repent of all my life long. I have of late years set myself much against it; and not without success, through mercy." He set down what were the prayers which, with many tears, he offered up to God on this sad occasion. "Good Lord, in mercy, give me strength and power to overcome this, and all the enemies of my salvation; and hereafter to resist all such wicked and evil temptations, both from men and devils. Lord, thou art merciful to all true penitents, but a consuming fire towards obstinate sinners: in tender mercy, look down upon me thy poor, unworthy, sinful creature, even one of the worst of thy creation, because I have known thy will, but have not done it. Now, O Lord, if thou shouldst be severe and strict with me, I were undone to all eternity. Strike this rock, O Lord, that the waters may gush out, even floods of tears. O purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me in the blood of Christ, and I shall be whiter than snow." He said to one who was no company keeper; "I wish I had done as you have done. If I were to live my life over again, I would never keep company with those that are given to drinking." Being once at a feast where full glasses were pressed, his parish minister, Mr. Jencks, being present, took him aside, and begged of him not to humour such sots, to his own damage and danger. This good caution confirmed his resolution, and made him more afraid than ever of such company; and through the grace of God, by degrees he got a victory over temptations to this sin.

Let drunkards, who make a mock at this sin, read this and tremble; for it will certainly be *bitterness in the latter end*, how light soever they make of it; taking a pleasure, and taking a pride, in making themselves and others drunk, and turning it off with a jest. Let them know, that they must either weep for it, and bewail it with godly sorrow, and by a holy violence used with themselves, must break off from it, and become sober, as this good man did, or they must drink of the cup of the Lord's wrath, which is poured out without mixture in a lake of fire and brimstone, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and not a drop of water allowed to cool the tongue. For, whatever they say, the God of truth has said, *Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God:*[a] they shall *not have peace who go on to add drunkenness to thirst.*[b] The wine that *gives its colour in the cup, at the last bites like a serpent.*[c]

And let not those who are unhappily entangled in temptations to this sin, despair of getting a victory over it, through the grace of God, which shall not be wanting to those that desire it, and pray for it, as this good man did, and are careful and faithful in the use of proper means for the improving of that grace. Those who are acceptable to their company, as he was, and upon that account are courted and respected in company, have need to double their guard, lest under pretence of obliging their friends, and entertaining them, and improving themselves and others by conversation, they wrong and ruin their own souls.

And let those who are out of the way of temptations of this kind, keep themselves so, and bless God, that they are so happy as to be strangers to this sin; and hope the best concerning others whom they see entangled in it, that they repent in secret of their folly, and that they may yet, through the help of divine grace, recover themselves out of this snare of the devil, in which so many are led, and held captive by him.

When he had attained to the age of fifty-seven, at which age both his father and mother died, that consideration, with some others, awakened him to a serious concern about his great change, and his everlasting state, and consequently to a closer application to the business of religion: then he began to be more diligent and serious than before, in prayer, reading, and other devout exercises. It was then, about the year 1694, that he set himself to write down his reflections and observations upon himself, his meditations and pious breathings towards God, memorandums of the sermons he heard, and very large collections out of the Scripture, and other good books he read, with some account of remarkable providences. This practice he continued from that time to his death, which was about fifteen years; and has left behind him seven books, three quartos, and four octavos, fairly written, which show him to be a man whose heart was very much upon another world, and who made it his great care to prepare for that world.

The reasons he gives for employing himself thus,

[a] 1 Cor. vi. 10.

[b] Deut. xxix. 19.

[c] Prov. xxiii. 31, 32.

are, because he had made it his chief end to honour the great God of heaven and earth, and his chief business to endeavour the salvation of his own precious and immortal soul; because he would often meditate on death, that he might prepare for his great change; because he would thus employ his vacant hours, that he might keep from idleness, and keep out of idle company. He hoped, likewise, that this practice would increase his knowledge, strengthen his faith, and give him more hopes of salvation. He also hoped it might be beneficial to his grandchildren, whom he desired to take the same method.

Much of what he wrote being transcribed out of the Bible and other good books, which might be thought needless, since the passages might be better read in their proper places, he thus excuses for it: that he transcribed those things which he was himself most affected with, and which, when they were collected and put together, would be the more ready for his use and meditation; that the writing of them over, would better settle them, and fix them in his memory; that both the writing and reading of them was pleasant and delightful to him; and that the time he employed herein, would, if not thus spent, in all probability, be worse spent. I wish others would be prevailed with to use the same expedient for the same good purposes.

The motto he wrote on his books was, "Piety is the way to prosperity, both now and hereafter." And thus he writes, "Should I fill my head with good thoughts, and this book with good sayings and sentences, yet, unless my heart be filled with sincerity and holy zeal, it is all as nothing." When he staid at home on the Lord's day in the afternoons, which he often did, while he lived in the country, that his whole family might go to church, he spent his whole time in this pious and profitable exercise.

And we shall now have little more to say of him, but what shall be gathered out of his own papers, and delivered in his own words, which it is hoped, may be regarded by some who had a kindness for him, and may make good impressions upon them, which may abide. We shall only glean some passages out of many of the same purport, and, for more clearness, reduce them to proper heads.

I. His deep concern about his soul and eternity. His soul was his darling, for thus he writes:

"O my soul, my precious soul, shall I hazard thee for all the good that is in the world? Surely there is an immortal spirit dwelling in the fleshly tabernacle, of more value than all earthly things, for it must live to all eternity, either in bliss or woe. This never-dying soul I value above all things here below. There is no greater folly or madness practised in this world, than over-caring for the body, and neglecting the immortal soul. The body hath no assurance of life one moment, nor of that dross and dung which most men so inordinately covet, which is transitory and fading, and not to be compared with our eternal concern. Even heathens, by the light of nature, did set a great value upon the soul of man; and shall not I then, who own myself to be a Christian, have the light of the gospel, and the knowledge of Christ, and many other benefits which tend to the advantage of my soul, shall not I above all things prize and take care of my immortal soul? Sad and miserable is their condition, who neglect their own souls, as the generality of men do. O my soul, let it be thy chief and continual care to seek and secure heaven!"

As he was walking in his fields, and looking on his improvements, he said to a friend who was with him, "All prospers, if the soul prosper. The most precious and valuable thing, that I am concerned for in this world, is my immortal, never-dying soul; which must fare in the next world according as I behave myself in this. O! it is rest for my precious and immortal soul, which I desire and aim at above all things whatsoever." He wondered at those who spent their precious time so contrary to reason and their own interest, when their immortal souls lie at stake, and are in danger to be lost to all eternity. "All my concerns here below (says he) will shortly end in death; and therefore it is my soul that I set so high a value upon, as the most precious jewel in the world, bought with the precious blood of the Son of God."

He writes this saying of Mr. Mede's: "O take heed thou art not found overvaluing other things, and undervaluing thy precious soul! Shall thy flesh, nay, thy beast, be beloved, and thy soul slighted? as if a man should feed his dog, and starve his child."

In a letter to his friend, who was concerned for his spiritual state, there are these passages: "I have read over and over your good advice, and seasonable admonitions. I take them very kindly, and give you great thanks, and do bless God, and shall do upon my knees, that any take so much care of my immortal soul. I may well take it as a message from God, whose assistance I humbly beg in the performance thereof, with your continued prayers on my behalf, against all the enemies of my salvation. With God's assistance, I shall endeavour to observe and keep your instructions, which are both necessary and pious. Your reproofs are sharp, but just and real. Should I go about to vindicate my past course of life, it is in vain; had I done any thing that were well, I am but an unprofitable servant, but shall daily beg for repentance and amendment of life. I desire two things of you; 1st, A frequent part of your prayers. 2dly, When you see or hear of any thing amiss in my conversation, that you would reprove me sharply: I shall take it kindly." So he writes, though to an inferior.

Dec. 16, 1690.

II. His exercise and expressions of repentance.

"It is my heart's desire to repent of all my sins. And I humbly and earnestly beg of God, that he would herein assist me with his Holy Spirit. It is with sorrow and shame, that I call to mind my sins, the sins of my whole life, humbly confessing them to the Almighty God. Lord, I repent, help my repentance, and make it sincere; Lord, I repent, accept my repentance through my blessed Saviour; in whose merits is my only hope of salvation. Lord, I repent, increase my repentance, that I may mourn for my sins all my days. Lord, I heartily grieve for them, and stedfastly purpose, by thy grace, to lead a new life. O seal my pardon in the blood of my Saviour, whom I stedfastly believe in. Lord, accept of sighs for tears; O that I could weep a flood of tears for my sins! O wicked wretch that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death? I desire to continue my repentance to my last moment, and to die repenting."

He writes many passages out of the books he read concerning repentance: as thus; "True repentance is a change of the whole man, the judgment, will, affections, conversation; it turns a man not only from this or that particular sin, but from all sin.—He whose mind and desires were before to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, and to prosper in the world, and enjoy the pleasures of it, now strives as hard to kill those desires, takes the world for vanity and vexation, and turns it out of his heart. No sin is rightly killed, till the love of every sin is killed. True repentance is turning to God, and setting our hearts and hopes on heaven, so that we now love holiness, and seek God's kingdom above all things in this world. To say we repent, and not to reform, to be sorry for sin to-day, and return to it to-morrow, is but counterfeit repentance."

Many confessions and lamentations of sin we find in his papers, with petitions for mercy: such as these;

"O God, when I call to mind the sins of my youth, the many and great offences, which I ungratefully committed against thee, my God; and when I consider my present state, how subject I am to failings and infirmities, and how apt I am to come short of my good designs and resolutions, I am almost ready to despair, and am full of doubts and fears: but when I call to mind the goodness and mercy, and the sufferings of my blessed Redeemer for me, I conceive some hopes."

"Lord, I am a sinful unworthy creature, that have made no suitable returns for the great and many mercies I have received from thee all the days of my life. Thou mightest justly have cut me off, and thrown me into utter darkness long ago; but good Lord, pardon my sins, and be reconciled to me, through the merits of my blessed Saviour. I have too much pampered this perishing body, and have taken too much delight in the vanities of this sinful world, little regarding the shortness and uncertainty of my life, and the greatness of that account I have shortly to make. My good desires, endeavours, and resolutions are often frustrated and disappointed; temptations overcome me; these are my daily grief. There is nothing in this world that troubles me more than sin: good Lord, remedy and amend all that is amiss in me, for Jesus's sake."

"O my soul, seek thou the Lord, humble thyself before him, beg for his grace, without which I can do nothing. Lord, I repent, and am ashamed when I look back, and consider how vile and wicked a creature I have been, the many great sins I have committed, none of which are hid from thine all-seeing eye; my sins of omission and commission, of weakness and wilfulness; many in number, heinous in nature. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, thy poor sinful servant, who am not worthy to breathe in thine air, or to take thy holy name into my polluted lips."

"I cannot melt into tears, as I should, for my sins; but when I consider what my dear Saviour suffered for my sake, I find my mind greatly troubled, and the hardness of my heart is my grief. Where must I seek for succour, but from thee, my God? O help me, and deliver me for thy mercy's sake. Thou art the only Physician that canst heal maladies; O heal this hard distracted heart of mine; compose it, mollify it, make it such as thou wouldst have it, for Christ's sake."

"I have *known the will* of my heavenly Father, but have not done it; therefore deserve to be *beaten with many stripes*. O let me with regret and sorrow look back upon a loose, ill spent life, which I must be afflicted in soul for now, and must amend, or suffer for eternity. O let me cry out with the gaoler, *What shall I do to be saved?*"

"When I look back and consider the number and greatness of my sins, I cannot but admire the mercy of God in sparing me so long: O how often have I provoked his great Majesty to be angry with me, till he has destroyed me, and cast me into hell; but he had spared me, because his mercy and compassions never fail. Ever blessed, praised, glorified, and magnified be thy great and holy name."

"Lord, give me hearty sorrow for all my offences, and grant that I may never be at peace with myself, till I am at peace with thee."

"I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me; when I address myself to any spiritual or heavenly employment, when I design to draw nigh to God, and promise myself comfort in communion with him, then is evil present. Could I but enjoy a freedom from it in the season of my duty, and the time of my communion with God, what a comfort would it be! but then am I molested with wanderings and distractions, then is sin most busy. O this is my great misery and burthen. Good Lord, help me out of these troubles."

"Two things lie very heavy upon me at this present, and greatly trouble me; ingratitude under great mercies, and impenitence under great sins; Lord, help me under these great straits."

"I strive against sin, but am often overcome; fight, but am often foiled: Lord, assist me in my spiritual warfare, and make me a conqueror."

"The longer I live, the more sensible I am of my own frailties and infirmities, hardness of heart, distraction in duty, want of zeal in the service of God; these are my grievances; the *spirit willing*, but the *flesh weak. O wretched man that I am! My sin is ever before me.* But I am resolved, by the help of God, it shall have no rest or quiet in my heart; I will continue to fight against sin and Satan, and all the enemies of my salvation; and though, like the sons of Zeruiah, they are *too hard for me*, yet I will daily beg and pray for thy help, O Lord, and the assistance of thy Holy Spirit against them, without which I can do nothing that is good. *Mine iniquities are gone over my head, as a heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me;* but *I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin.*"

III. His particular striving against the sin of passion, and hastiness of spirit.

"Lord, thou knowest my frame; I humbly confess, to my shame and grief, that I have been passionate and impatient; it is a misery that has too much attended me in the whole course of my life: the Lord in mercy pardon me, and change my corrupt vile nature. Lord, give me patience and meekness, and an humble spirit, that I may bear with submission all the afflictions that come from thee, my God, and all the disturbances and injuries that are offered me by men."——Through the grace of God, he got very much the mastery of this corruption toward his latter end.

"I bless the Lord, I do what lies in me to live at peace with all men; I am willing to bear many wrongs, and freely forgive all men that have done me wrong; and were I satisfied that I had wronged any man, I would freely make restitution. I wish harm to no man: if any do to me, I pray God forgive them, for I freely do, as I desire to be forgiven myself. I confess, through passion I may jar with a neighbour, but I dare not bear malice, or harbour revenge in my heart, against any man living, nor ever had one suit or trial with any man in any court in all my life."

"I have read (says he) of a good man, who, when one wondered at his exceeding great patience in bearing injuries, answered, "When my heart is ready to rise against those that have done me wrong, I presently begin to think of the indignities and injuries that were done to Christ, which he bore patiently for me. If my own servant should pluck my beard, or smite me on the face, yet this were nothing to what my Saviour suffered; and I never leave off thinking on this, till my mind is still and quiet.—Who am I, that I should not be crossed?"

He found great advantage against this sin, by the frequent receiving of the Lord's supper; for, (says he,) "When I meet with wrongs and abuses, affront and injuries, they disturb and vex my mind, and often put me into a passion; and then, in haste, I threaten to go to law. But I presently consider that I am a Christian, that I was lately at the Lord's table, and must appear there again ere long, if not prevented by sickness or death; and how dare I then harbour malice or revenge? Then I soon alter my mind; for my great Creator hath said, *Vengeance is mine*, and my blessed Saviour hath strictly charged us *to love our enemies, and bless them that curse us.*"

IV. His doubts and fears about his spiritual state, with his good hopes and resolutions.

"When I inspect the state of my soul, doubts and fears arise; especially when I recollect the number and greatness of my sins, and observe the present hardness of my heart, and dryness of my eyes. I am subject to a wandering fancy and distractions in duty: God seems to frown, and to withdraw himself from me. It is sin that is the only cause of this my present misery; but when I think of God's mercies and Christ's merits, and the comfortable promises of the gospel, my hope revives. Lord, my sins are great, but thy mercies are greater; therefore, I will never despair: if I perish, it shall be at thy feet. *In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be confounded.*"

"I seldom miss any opportunity of coming to the Lord's table; but I want that sensible joy and communion with God, which many good Christians have, and that inward comfort, which is of more value than all the riches in the world. My heart is hard, my affections dull, I am often lukewarm, and unfit for holy duties. Lord, it is thou alone that canst help me, and vain is any other help; of myself I can do nothing; I have none to fly to but to thee; Christ is the rock on which my foundation shall be laid: O pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Thou hast said, *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest:* these are comfortable words to a poor sinner. Assist me by thy Spirit, good Lord, that I may embrace them, and rightly apply them."

"O when will the happy time come, that I shall be set at liberty from sin and corruption, from the body and the world? When will the cares of this life cease to trouble me, that I may repose in God? His love and favour is the greatest comfort in the world, that will make a death-bed easy, and dying hours comfortable."

"It is the great mercy of God, that hath supported me under many temptations. I have often fallen; but, through the goodness of God, I have risen again. I have been long troubled with doubts

and fears, yet have not despaired of God's mercy. Let not his goodness encourage me to presumption or vain hopes, or to think my own case better than really it is; but put me upon striving to enter in at the strait gate, and working out my salvation with fear and trembling, that I may make my calling and election sure, while it is called to-day, because the night is very near, when I shall work no more. Lord, give me grace, though I want comfort."

It was some encouragement to him when he read the lives of good men, to find that they had the same exercises, particularly that of Mr. Philip Henry. "If such an eminent holy man" (said he) "that lived a life of communion with God, yet complained of wanderings and vain thoughts in duty, &c. I will not despond, who have the same burthens to complain of."

He also took comfort from a passage he transcribed from the present Lord Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, which was this: "The strongest encouragement of our endeavours towards heaven, is, that all our defects shall be supplied by the infinite merits of our Lord and Saviour, who knows the infirmities of our nature, takes the will for the deed, and admits honest endeavours in lieu of perfect obedience. The goodness of God is infinite, and his mercy is over all his works."

"I believe (says he) that vain and groundless hope of salvation is the ruin of many, who say they hope in Christ, but keep not his commandments; whereas, it is not saying, *Lord, Lord*, that he will accept, but doing the will of our Father; it is not my prayers, nor my reading good books, nor writing good things, that will bring me to heaven, without faith and repentance, and serving God in sincerity."

V. His self-examination, and evidences for heaven.

"Were I capable, I would write something of the hardness and deceitfulness of man's heart, since I can say so much on that subject by woful experience, for it hath been a continual trouble to me most of my days. "The heart" (says one) "is that which the eye of God is, and the eye of a Christian ought to be, chiefly fixed upon." Many an earnest prayer have I put up to God to soften this stony heart, and fix this wandering mind: O that at length my heart might be wrought into a right frame. Could I win my heart to God, and keep my heart with God, I should think myself a happy man. I pray daily that God would *create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.* O that I could obtain the favour of God, and communion with him, which I value more than all the riches of this world. The light of his countenance, an interest in Christ, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit, I desire above all worldly treasures."

"Lord, thou knowest all the secrets of my heart, and all my thoughts afar off, all my present designs and purposes, which, I hope, are well intended; but I want thine assistance. The heart is deceitful, and doubtless mine as bad as any; how then shall I judge of my spiritual state, which most judge too favourably of in their own case? If the heart be filled with sin, and so continues with delight, there is no room or habitation for God and Christ in it. O that I could put away all the evil of my doings, and repent with that repentance which is not to be repented of. So far as I know my own heart, these are my unfeigned desires. Help and assist me, O God, for thy mercy's sake. Let thy strength appear in my weakness."

"Let me not censure others, but begin at home, and examine my own conscience, and judge my own heart: I am in the sight and presence of God, whose all-seeing eye beholds all my thoughts, words, and actions; and it is dangerous to dissemble with God, or flatter myself."

Mr. Corbet's inquiry into the state of his soul, was of great use to him in this part of his work. "Doubts and fears arise, (says he,) I feel many conflicts between flesh and spirit; and though the flesh often prevails in some particular instances, yet I trust, through grace, the spirit hath the predominant power. Vain thoughts, unruly passions, often intrude into my heart, but they are unwelcome guests there, and soon turned out. I hope I shall never offend my God willingly; and that I do not delight or allow myself in any known sin."

"Some of my weak imperfect evidences for heaven are these: 1. My hope is built purely upon the mercy of God and the merits of Christ. 2. My designs, endeavours, and resolutions are frequently good. 3. It is my desire, delight, and practice to hear the word of God preached. 4. I have a great esteem for all that love and fear God, of what persuasion soever. 5. When I have done any action that I think is pleasing to God, it is my great joy and heart's delight. 6. When I have done any ill action, or committed any sin, it is the grief of my soul. 7. It is a very great trouble to me, to hear the name of God profaned, or his word undervalued, or evil spoken of. 8. I have been averse to law-suits, and, to my power, am a peace-maker. 9. I have been always willing and desirous to keep holy the Lord's day. 10. There is not that person living that I envy or hate, or seek to be revenged on; if any hate me, I pray God forgive them, for I forgive them freely. 11. Though I have been a vile sinner, yet, I hope, I can truly say, that I am a penitent sinner, and desire from the bottom of my heart, to sorrow for all my sins, and to amend my life: Good Lord, help me so to do. 12. I had rather have a heart to love God above all, to love him perfectly, than have all the riches, honours, and pleasures in this world. I would rather lose all things, than the grace and

favour of God, and the benefit of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. I hope I can truly say, with Mr. Corbet, as far as I am able to discern my own heart and ways, I have chosen the Lord for my portion; I take up my rest in him, and not in the creature. To love, fear, admire, and bless him, and to have communion with him, is my chief joy. I am heartily grieved for loving God so little: yet I am certain, I love nothing more than God, and in my esteem and choice, I prefer a spiritual, heavenly life above all things upon earth."

"Lord, I love thee, for I am grieved at thy absence, and rejoice in thy presence; I love those that are like thee; I love the place and duties where thou art wont to meet thy people; I am grieved when thou art dishonoured by myself or others; I would have a heart to love, and look, and long for thy coming and appearing in glory."

His particular actions he examined by the twelve questions in Mr. H.'s Communicant's Companion, *ch.* 4. which he transcribed and enlarged upon, concluding: "I have, to the best of my knowledge, examined myself upon these queries, and find that in many things I have fallen short, through negligence and human frailty; but in some things, conscience witnesseth for me, that according to my ability, I have kept my integrity; and I trust for the time to come, that, through the assistance of Almighty God, I shall walk more circumspectly."

VI. His contentment with his lot, and gracious contempt of this world.

Though he lived upon a rack-rent, yet he was very well pleased with the little he had of this world. Thus he writes: "It hath been my great happiness, through the goodness of God to me, that my passage through the world, thus far, hath been mostly pleasant and plentiful; I have had Agur's desire, neither poverty nor riches, being ever content with what God appointed for me. I always had a very grateful esteem of my own condition, and have not been subject to murmur and repine."

"It is my trouble, that the care and business of the world doth often take my thoughts off from better things; but I am endeavouring to bring my worldly affairs into less compass, that I may hang the world loose about me, may use it as if I used it not; setting my affections on things above, and seeking, first, the kingdom of God, not doubting, but that then other things shall be added."

"There is not one day of entire peace in these things; but either something troubles, or nothing satisfies. We may be happy without riches and honours, but cannot be happy without grace. It is madness in men, to lose their immortal souls for the dross and dung of this world. He that sets his heart upon this world, can never seek the world to come as he ought; therefore, O my soul, use all the care and diligence imaginable, to take thine affections off from the vanities of this world." Thus little do the things of time appear to those, to whom the great things of eternity are revealed by faith.

Archbishop Tillotson says, "Nothing doth so besot the mind, and extinguish in it the sense of divine things, as sensual pleasures do; if we fall in love with them, they will steal away our hearts from God. Let my soul therefore despise the world, and devote itself wholly to the fear and service of God."

"Worldly things often hinder the good designs of good men, and as for bad men, they carry them headlong to ruin; for they swim down the stream of pleasure, not considering what account they have to make, nor how it will be with them, when they lie gasping and groaning on their death-beds."

He had but little (in comparison) of the good things of this present time; yet he often said, "I have enough of this world, and as much as I desire:" and that he would not thank any one to give him 100*l.* per annum: For, "I have enough to maintain me, and am content with it; and if I had such an addition to what I have, instead of doing me good, it might perhaps do me hurt." Thus *godliness with contentment is great gain;* it is all the wealth in the world. They who think what they have enough, have enough; and who would desire more? Happy they who bring their mind to their condition.

VII. His private devotions.

It appears, by his papers, that he conversed much with God in solitude. Thus he writes in 1698: "It is my desire, my real purpose and full resolution, to do these two things for the future, as God shall enable me: 1. To fall down upon my knees three times a day to pray, and give thanks to God; so Daniel did, and David, evening, and morning, and at noon. 2. That the first and last thoughts of every day shall be of God; and that as soon as I lie down to sleep, I will call to mind the passages of the day: and how can I spend my time better, when I lie awake in the night, than in communing with God and my own heart. I know the fittest posture for prayer is upon my knees; yet, I believe, God will accept of prayers and ejaculations from his people, at any time, in any place, if they come from an upright heart."

"I bless God, according to my abilities, I frequently make my addresses to my great Creator, though I am unworthy to take his holy name into my polluted lips: I am sensible of my insufficiency for prayer, yet, I hope, my merciful Father will accept me; for he regards not so much the words of prayer, as the heart and the spirit of prayer; and he rejects no humble faithful suppliant, be his speech ever so weak; even broken words will serve, if they come from a broken heart. Prayer without sincerity is a lie to God. Lord, give me wisdom from above, and teach me to pray, so that my prayers may be acceptable to thee, my God; that every prayer may come warm from the heart, may be an effectual fervent

prayer, which availeth much. If we employ both head and heart in the service of our prayers, then we may pray at all times, and in all places. Whenever we have a heart to pray to God, he has an ear to hear. It is the heart God requires in this duty; for a dead, dull, heartless prayer is an abomination unto the Lord."

He much esteemed a book, called "The Liberty of Prayer," written by Mr. Jencks of Harley, read it much, and wrote many excellent passages out of it. He was for praying *always with all prayer;* and despised neither prayers by a form, nor extempore prayers, thinking each to have their excellences at several times; and that he who truly loves prayer, will truly love both.

In his family he prayed daily, and usually read the Scriptures, or caused them to be read, and sung psalms. There he used mixed prayers, as Dr. Fuller calls it; partly a form, which he wrote down in his book, containing the essential parts of prayer, which always remained unaltered; but adding many movable petitions to it, as the Spirit of God enabled him, and as there was occasion.

"A prayerless family (says he) is no better than a beast-house, and indeed a den of thieves, where God is robbed of his tribute, and their souls of the benefit. He that will undertake to prove that prayer is needless in families, shall oblige them to be his humble servants, or any one's, but his that made them."

VIII. His worship of God in public.

He attended the public worship of God in his parish church every Lord's day, and was sure to come early, though he was near two miles distant from it; yet he could say, he had never been absent from it any Lord's day for seven years, except twice, and then his occasions called him to other parish churches. In the afternoon, when he lived in the country, he often staid at home that he might send all his family to church, because he thought he could spend his time better at home than any of them could; but when he came to live in the town, he constantly went to church both parts of the day; and, at noon, on the Lord's day, a chapter was read to his family, a psalm sung, and concluded with prayer.

He wrote down, when he came home, the text, and what he could remember of the sermons he heard, that he might have the benefit and comfort of reviewing them afterwards.

But he was in a special manner exemplary, for his diligent and serious attendance on the ordinance of the Lord's supper; which he rarely omitted whenever there was an opportunity for it in his parish, which usually was eight times a year; and he made very solemn preparation for it. Much of what he has left behind him in writing, is sacramental meditations, partly his own, and partly gathered out of good books; Mr. Gouge's, Mr. Flavel's, Mr. Shower's and others.

"According to the dying charge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, (says he,) I do frequently attend at the Lord's table, and do that *in remembrance of him*, as he hath required. Lord, I dislike none of thy commands, they are all good and reasonable; but I find fault with my own wicked heart, that I do not more heartily love, and more readily obey, them. I bless the Lord, I have been seldom absent from his table these many years, and have found great benefit by frequent communion. I am sorry when I see but a small appearance at the Lord's supper. Some are absent, because they love their sins and will not part with them, and so slight their souls; others, because they overcharge their hearts with the cares of this world. Mr. Jenks our minister told us, 'All worldly business is either lawful or unlawful: that which is unlawful, in the name of God, renounce it; that which is lawful, and used with moderation, rather fits a man for the sacrament than otherwise.' Others are absent upon a mistake, that they can never be well prepared to receive."

He usually spent one day in fasting and prayer in secret, before the Lord's supper; and sometimes two. "These two days, (says he,) I desire to set apart for the worship and service of God, with a full purpose to make what preparation I can, by the grace of God, for receiving the holy sacrament of the *Lord's supper*. To that end, I will, as God shall enable me, humble myself, and with sorrow and shame confess my manifold sins to my merciful Father, who is a sin-pardoning God; I am ashamed, and do repent, of all my sins; and it is my heart's desire not only to confess them, but to forsake, detest, and abhor all manner of sin whatever. Lord, grant that I may not bring one beloved sin to thy table. Thou hast promised pardon to all that truly repent, and eternal life to all that believe in thy Son. Behold, O Lord, I heartily repent of my sin, and stedfastly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, putting my whole trust in him alone for salvation. Enable me, O Lord, by thy grace, to persevere to the end, that I may be blessed for ever, through Jesus Christ. Amen."

Thus he writes; "To-morrow is a day of great concern, not for our bodies, but our souls, for we are to meet the Lord at his own table. O with what humility, reverence, repentance, faith, charity, ought we to appear there! I have endeavoured to prepare myself, setting this day apart for prayer and meditation, especially on the sufferings of my dear Saviour for my sins, both in his life and at his death. I hope that my striving and struggling is a sign that I am not dead in trespasses and sins; for a dead man strives not. I beg of God often, and heartily, that I may be upright in all my duties."—But he

afterwards writes; "At this sacrament my heart was but dull and sluggish, which is my great trouble; I thought I took some pains with my hard heart in my preparations, yet my endeavours proved ineffectual at this time. God be merciful to me a sinner, for the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Another time he writes: "I did appear at the Lord's table, and receive the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, I hope to the benefit and advantage of my precious and immortal soul; I found much joy and comfort in the ordinance, and it was very delightful to my soul. Lord, bless and sanctify it to me, and grant, O God, that I may ever bear upon my heart those promises and resolutions which I make at thy holy table."

And thus: "O Lord, I dare not approach thy holy table in my own strength or merits, but in the strength and merits of my dear Saviour Jesus Christ; for I know, when I have done all that I can, to fit and prepare myself for thy table, my endeavours will be found imperfect; yet, I will hope and trust in thee, my God, for thy help and assistance, and the free pardon and forgiveness of all my sins, through the mediation of my dear Saviour, and this I beg for Jesus' sake, and for thy mercy's sake. Amen, Amen."

And thus: "I often call to mind that memorable saying of Mr. Flavel: 'The Lord's supper and the point of death require equal seriousness; we should go to that ordinance, as if we were going into another world.' O what need is there of an awful, composed spirit, when we approach the Lord in this ordinance. O that I could humble myself at this time, and examine myself, and search and try my heart and ways, that I may find out my errors, and where my unfitness lies, that I may repent and amend! O how unsuitable is a dry eye, and a hard heart, to such an ordinance as this! Now would I free myself from all my cares of this world, be in perfect charity with all, and be affected in prayer and meditation. The chief things this vain world affords, are honours, riches, and pleasures: I desire no greater honour than the love and favour of God; no riches, but an interest in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and benefit by him; nor value any pleasure like communion with God: Lord, grant me these, and I desire no more."

"Lord, I stretch out the weak arm of my faith towards thee; O stretch out the mighty arms of thy power and mercy, and come and save me. I am fearful that I am not rightly prepared, but I hope this is an error on the better hand; then are we most fit, when we are most humble and ashamed in the sense of our own unfitness. I will, by the grace of God, use my best endeavours, acknowledging my own insufficiency. The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak; therefore will I beg of my heavenly Father, that he will direct, assist, and accept of me, through Christ my Saviour. Let this unspeakable love of thine constrain me to obedience."

Once when he was prevented from this ordinance by an unexpected throng of worldly business, which he thought did for the present unfit him for it, he writes, "It was a great trouble to me that I lost such an opportunity; Lord, pardon this great neglect, this sin of omission, and prepare me, by thy grace, to embrace the next opportunity."

His prayer, sometimes, after the receiving was, "O most glorious Lord God, let me now sing praise to thy great name; for blessed are they that dwell in thy house, and are fed, though it be with the crumbs that fall from thy table; and now I have tasted and seen how good thou art, and that thou hast heard my prayers, and granted my request: O that I might never depart from thee, or be weary of thy service. Strengthen me, O Lord, against all manner of sin, that I may say, with the princely prophet, *I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* Direct me, O Lord, by thy Holy Spirit, and carry me through this vale of tears, this valley of the shadow of death, for Jesus' sake. *Amen.*"

When he received the Lord's supper, upon the account of his office, he writes, "I doubt there are many who come upon this occasion, and neglect the duty at other times, which is a sad thing; but let me begin at home, and not judge other men, but examine myself."

IX. His thankfulness to God for the mercies he had received.

He often expresses himself much affected with the goodness of God to him, the memory of which he abundantly utters. In August 1697, he thus writes: "This being the 60th year of my age, I thank my God, who hath spun out my days to this length. I praise the Lord, that he hath made me a reasonable creature, a man, and not a beast; a Christian, and not a heathen; that he hath planted me in a protestant nation, blessed me with the light of the gospel, which I value above all things: *Come, behold the works of the Lord*, what he has *done for my soul!* I have a competency to live upon; though it seems but little in the eyes of some, yet, I bless my God, I think it sufficient, and am therewith very well content. I have enough to keep me while I live, and bury me when I am dead, and that is sufficient. Naked came I into the world, and brought nothing with me, and naked shall I return, and carry nothing away with me."

"If I look back, and review the mercies of my life, they are innumerable. I shall only name some: I never was arrested or imprisoned in all my life; never had a joint put out, or a bone broken; never received any great hurt or wound, to use a surgeon; have been long in the militia, yet never was in one

battle, so peaceable have our days been. I have had much dealing in the world, yet never had a trial in any court, which has made my life the easier. I never was assaulted by thieves, nor had my pockets picked. I have lived in repute and credit, and never under any disgrace or scandal; and what false reports have sometimes been raised of me, never turned much to my prejudice. I have had many creature-comforts, good wives, good children, hopeful grand-children, kind friends, and loving neighbours, &c. My lot is cast in a fruitful soil, where the gospel flourisheth, and is frequently preached, when many, more deserving than I, have lived in poverty and affliction, or have been grieved with wicked relations, that have brought down *their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave*. My passage through the world has been very pleasant."

How may this good man's thankfulness to God shame those who, instead of caring and working for a livelihood, and paying a great rent, as he did, live at ease, receive great rent, and deliver all their care and business upon the heads and hands of others, and have every thing about them pleasing to a nicety, and yet seldom think of their obligations to the God of their mercies, or give him praise for his favours to them.

But see how he was affected with these mercies: "Lord," (says he,) "it is owing to thy goodness, not to any desert of mine, that my life has been so comfortable. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits! I will acknowledge his goodness to me, and praise him while I have a day to live in this world. O that I could in some measure walk answerably to the goodness of God to me! Lord, thou hast given me abundance of temporal good things, give me spiritual grace, and I ask no more. Yet (he adds) the present pleasures of my life shall never extinguish in me the thoughts of death, because the one is certain, the other uncertain."

He often expresses his thankfulness to God for public mercies; for peace, and plenty, and health in the nation, especially our happy enjoyment of the gospel; that not only our civil rights and liberties, but our religion, is secured to us by law; that our land is not a seat of war. And he writes with great compassion concerning those countries that are so: "Sure no nation under the sun enjoys more mercies than we in England do at this time. I am obliged to praise God, not only for particular mercies to me and mine, but for his common mercies to the land wherein we live. Blessed be the God of heaven for them; and again, I say, blessed be his great and holy name for evermore. How great is the patience and forbearance of God towards us, though our sins cry aloud for vengeance; and we are very ungrateful for the mercies we receive. Some do not like the present government; others grudge at the taxes; others are highly offended at the toleration; and some are scarce content with any thing, not considering the calamities of other nations. How barbarously the poor protestants of France have been used by their tyrannical prince, and what desolations he has made with fire and sword in many of his neighbouring countries, though of his own religion!"

X. The sense he had of his afflictions.

Undertaking in his old age to give an account of his troubles, thus he begins: "My greatest trouble is for the sins that I have committed." Which he took all occasions to reflect upon with godly sorrow, abhorring himself, groaning under the burthen of corruption, longing for deliverance, and crying to heaven for help. His books are full of passages to this purpose: wondering at those fools who can make a mock at sin; who plead for it, laugh at it, turn it into a jest, and glory in it; forgetting the nature of God, the worth of their souls, and the awful eternity they are so near. Though such may have the name of Christians, it is but the name. O what heart-piercing thoughts will such have of eternity shortly; and they will be themselves astonished to think, how they could possibly make so very light of these great things.

His next trouble was, worldly care and business; "Which" (says he) "is often a great hinderance to my devotion, distracts my head, disturbs my mind, and makes me unfit for holy duties. An affable temper hath been injurious to me: I have been always ready to serve my neighbour or friend in any business that I was capable of, whereby I have lost much time; but I have therein endeavoured to do good, and show that I love my neighbour as myself. But I earnestly desire, that I may desist from worldly business one year or two before my death, that I may have the more time to prepare for it."

His next trouble was, the painful infirmities of old age; stone or gravel in the kidneys, sciatica, and the like. "Though I live (says he) with much content, yet not without a thorn in the flesh; scarce a night passes without smarting pain; but it is God's goodness that it is not worse. I have reason to bear it patiently; for it is less than my sins have deserved. Though the outward man grows weaker, I hope the inward man grows stronger. Lord, cast me not off in the time of old age." A book written by Mr. Corbit of Chichester, when he was grievously afflicted with the stone, was of great use to him, and he collected much out of it; concluding, "Lord, put thy Spirit of grace and meekness into my heart, that I may bear with patience whatever thou art pleased to lay upon me, and help me to follow this good example. I can truly say, my pains and distempers have very much drawn my mind off this world. *It is good for me I have been afflicted.*" He wrote down divers passages of Scripture, to comfort himself with under his pains: *Happy is the man whom God cor-*

*teth, for he maketh sore, and bindeth up. Whom Lord loveth he chasteneth. Blessed is the man om thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest.* And ny the like.

Being once wonderfully delivered from hurt by a ngerous fall from his horse, his foot hanging in e stirrup, so that he had been in all likelihood lled, if his shoe had not happily come off, he writes ns of it; "In my distress, I said, Lord, have mercy my soul, for I see that my life is gone; my hope is in God, to whom I cried for deliverance, and heard me according to his word: *Call upon me the time of trouble, I will deliver thee, and thou alt glorify me.* God granted me deliverance; and all not I now endeavour to glorify thee, O thou reserver of men? O let this for ever engage me to ep close to Christ my refuge; and make me say, ith Ezra, Since thou, Lord, hast given me such a eliverance as this, should I again break thy commandments? Lord, grant that I may never forget y goodness." He failed not to give thanks to od for the mercy, upon the yearly return of the ay.

XI. His zeal for the suppression of vice and profaneness.

When the minister of his parish, and others of his eighbours, (well affected to religion and virtue,) oined in a society to promote the design of her Majesty's pious proclamation, *for the preventing and unishing of vice, profaneness, and immorality*, by *nforming* against offenders, in order to the putting of the laws in execution, he was an active man among them. Though many opposed this good work, and reproached them that acted in it, yet he knew he had the law of God and the land on his side, and was not discouraged in it. This good design was countenanced and encouraged by the Archbishop of Canterbury's circular letter to the bishops of his province, dated April 4, 1699, the printed sermons of the Bishops of Ely, Salisbury, Chester, Chichester, Dr. Stanhope, Dr. Willis, Dr. Kennet, and other dignitaries of the church. The Lord Bishop of Oxford thus addresses himself to those societies: "Ye brave and truly heroic souls, who have entered into a holy confederacy, not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, &c. your adversaries are numerous and powerful; the prince of the power of the air, with his rulers and companies, and the children of disobedience upon earth, in whom he worketh, all evil spirits, and all wicked men; and from these you must expect the most vigorous and obstinate opposition. But be not afraid of their terrors; remember that the battle is not yours, but God's." &c. Much to the same purpose is collected in the Account of the Progress of the Reformation of Manners, the thirteenth edition. It is therefore a great surprise and grief to all good men, to find those societies represented quite otherwise by Dr. Sacheverell, in his assize sermon at Derby, Aug. 15, 1709. Where he says, "That under the sanctified pretence of reformation of manners, they turn informers, assume an odious and factious office, arrogantly intrench upon others' Christian liberty and innocence, and under the show of zeal and purity, the most infallible token of a dexterous and refined hypocrite and knave, turn the world upside down. And these troublesome wasps erect themselves into illegal inquisitions; and whatever godly and fallacious glosses they may cast upon their actions, they are doubtless the unwarrantable effects of an idle, encroaching, impertinent, and meddling curiosity, the base product of ill-nature, spiritual pride, censoriousness, and sanctified spleen, pretending to carry on the blessed work of reformation, by lying, slandering, whispering, backbiting, and tale-bearing, the most express character of the devil, who is emphatically styled, The grand accuser of the brethren. No wonder then, that St. Paul has so severely stigmatized these busy-bodies in other men's matters, by ranking them with *murderers* and *thieves*, as the most proper persons to keep one another company."

When this good man was told, he would be accounted a busy-body for joining to this society; he said he valued it not, so that he was doing good, and were honouring God. He gives this account of it; "We met about twenty of us at our minister's house, the last Lord's day in the month, after evening prayer, to consult about carrying on the good work of the reformation of manners in the parish; and we had pretty good success, many were restrained from open profaneness, the poor relieved; but we met with discouragement from some, whom we hoped would have encouraged us."

Once coming into a public house, and hearing a gentleman most profanely swearing, though a stranger to him, he desired him to forbear. Said he, "Thou art some presbyterian, I warrant thee." Said the lieutenant, "Pray sir, what church are you of?" "Of the church of England," said he. Then said the lieutenant, "I am sorry you are of the same church that I am of, for you are a disgrace to it."

"I once" (says he) "heard a friend of mine talk atheist-like, very profanely. I reproved him, saying, "Sir, why do you talk so wickedly? Do you think there is neither God nor devil, heaven nor hell?" He answered, "It may be there are such things, but I know not where they are." I answered, "Sir, in time you may know, to your own sorrow and amazement." By this time he doth, for he died lately.

XII. His charity, especially for the teaching of poor children.

He was very liberal to the poor, according to his ability. A worthy knight giving away many of Mr. Gouge's tracts, entitled, *Surest and safest way*

*of thriving*, one of them came into his hand. After he had read it, he wrote down his resolution, which was, from that time forward to double his charity. He loved to employ poor workmen, and was kind to them, saying, they worked hard for a little money.

He wrote down such passages as these, to stir up himself to charity: "It is not he that possesses wealth, and keeps it by him, that is rich, but he that distributes it in charity, which will make men rich for ever. When thou givest to the poor, thou securest to thyself; and what thou withholdest another shall possess. Give to the poor, and it shall be given thee; it is lent to the Lord, and God twice repays it; in this world by a blessing on thy wealth, and in heaven he repays it over again. Thou shalt have in grace, what thou partest with in money."

He contributed very cheerfully to the teaching of poor children, and bought divers of that little book, called, *The guide to heaven*, to give away, and had a great esteem for that book; generally carried one about him to read at his leisure. He much rejoiced in the increase of the charity schools, and was pleased to see the children taught at those schools carry themselves reverently at church, and hear them say their catechism. When he died, out of his little, he left ten pounds to the charity-school in Wibunbury parish.

XIII. His respect to good ministers, and his grief concerning those who were otherwise, and his lamenting our unhappy divisions.

As he had a reverence and love for God, so he had for all his; his day, his people, his ordinances, his ministers. He was, in judgment and practice, for the church of England, as by law established; "for" (says he) "it is my belief that a man may, by the grace of God, live as holy a life in this church as in any." He does in his books bless God for the learned and pious clergy of the church of England. It rejoiced him to hear (a few days before he died) the present Lord Bishop of Chester preach so excellent a sermon at Nantwich, that had the marrow and substance of the gospel in it, on 1 Tim. i. 15. and to hear of that excellent charge he gave his clergy, to teach their people the necessity of divine revelation, the divine authority of the Scripture, and the divinity of our Saviour, and to press holiness of life; and that they should set a good example, and deny themselves in lawful things for the good of their people; and refrain from public houses: and as to those protestant dissenters, that carried it humbly, and as they ought, they should not be behind-hand with them in love and kindness. He rejoiced that the church had many such.

He had a great value for Mr. Jenks, who was minister of Wibunbury, and died July 19, 1700. "I got much benefit to my soul (says he) by his good preaching, and exemplary living. He was a man of a good natural temper, an ingenious preacher, sober and temperate, very charitable, and of a public spirit. He used his best endeavours to promote religion in the parish. I have heard him reprove sin and idle talk very boldly. He was diligent in the duties of a minister. He was a constant reader of the prayers, and frequently administered the Lord's supper; carefully catechised the children and servants in the summer time; visited the sick in all quarters of his parish, both poor and rich; would go to any part of the parish to baptize children that were sick, and not fit to be brought to church; took a deal of pains to get subscriptions for the maintaining of petty schools, to teach children to read. He did his utmost towards the suppression of vice, particularly the punishing of the filthy sin of fornication in the parish; but herein he was opposed by some, to his great grief, which made him often say, that Christianity was come to a very low ebb among us, when men that profess Christianity hinder the punishment of vice and debauchery. I asked him once to spend his two-pence with me: says he, "I never went to an ale-house on purpose to spend two-pence, in all my life." For repairing the vicarage-house, and improving the glebe, he exceeded most men, and endeavoured all that in him lay, to promote all the concerns of the church. Mr. Lancaster preached his funeral sermon, on Acts xx. 20. *I have taught you publicly, and from house to house*; and gave him a very high character, which he well deserved." After the funeral, Mr. Lancaster came to Lieutenant Illidge, took him by the hand, and said, "You were none of those that grieved your minister."

"In the time of our vacancy," (says he,) "it was my frequent prayer to Almighty God, that he would be pleased to send us a minister that truly feared God and loved religion." He also took the boldness, in his great zeal, to write to my Lord Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, who is patron, beseeching him, for Christ's sake, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, to provide for this great parish (being eighteen townships) such a minister as may answer the great charge and trust he undertakes; one truly religious, laborious, and an able preacher, that may bring honour to God, and our holy religion, &c. praying God to direct his Lordship in the choice. And when his lordship had presented Mr. Bromfield, the present incumbent, and he had had some trial of him, he writes, "What great cause have I to thank and praise the Lord, who hath heard my prayers, and sent us such a good minister." Some time after he wrote to Mr. Bromfield, expressing his great satisfaction in him as his spiritual guide, and begging his pious advice and instruction in his spiritual concerns; "for it is from your mouth (saith he) that I receive the good word of God, and from your hand I receive the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, and according to your counsel I purpose to proceed, as God shall enable me." He prayed earnestly for his minister, that he might live long to the glory of

God, and might be an instrument of the conversion and salvation of many souls.

Concerning the divisions among us, he thus writes: "I own myself to be a member of the church of England, which, I think, is not exceeded by any other in purity: I was baptized, and have continued in that communion all my days, yet have great charity for protestant dissenters, that truly fear God, and love religion. I am much troubled when I hear such abused, and reproached, and scorned by wicked and profane wretches, that will swear, and curse, and be drunk, and stick at no manner of debauchery; and yet boast that they are church-of-England men. God knows, these are a disgrace to our church, and a great scandal to religion. These are the men that undermine the church, and are drawing down judgments on themselves and the whole nation. And some of our high clergymen will preach against profaneness in the pulpit, but allow it, and laugh at it, in the ale-house; and will rather reproach and persecute an honest dissenter, for truly serving God, than make complaint of, or endeavour to punish, a profane swearer, a drunkard, or a debauched wretch, that blasphemes the great God. We have good laws against profaneness, but not put in execution: it is as the prophet Hosea says, *like people, like priest.* I once reproved a minister for sitting in idle company, and hearing a deal of obscene and wicked talk. He answered, "I am not to reprove such things out of the pulpit." So careless and lukewarm in religion are many of them. They live loose lives themselves, and grow envious at those who serve God after a more serious manner, though of their own communion, and true sons of the church. Doubtless it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for such men, especially those that persecute and reproach the servants of God; whoso offends one of these, better he were thrown into the sea with a millstone about his neck. Good Lord, in mercy turn the hearts of those blind guides, who call themselves the ministers of Christ, but discover the contrary, by their ambition and pride, and seeking revenge upon their poor dissenting brethren, rather promoting animosities than using means for peace."

"Another time" (says he) "I was in company at dinner, where there were many that count themselves of the high church, and abundance of cursing and swearing there was among them; and though there were some clergymen at table, they showed no dislike of it, nor gave one word of reproof to the swearers. I very much suspect that such men are no ministers of Christ, who can stand by, and hear their Master abused, and have nothing to say on his behalf. Indeed of late, there is a generation of young clergymen among us, who are proud, and idle, and loose, and fitter to go to school than to the pulpit."

Let none blame him for his zeal in this matter, since he himself knew, by sad experience, what influence the ill examples of the clergy have upon others; for he remembered with grief, that above twenty years ago, when he himself lived a careless life, he sat up one sabbath night, drinking till the next morning, and two clergymen were in company with him all that time; one that had preached that day, and the other the minister of the parish. Towards morning, when they had drunk the house dry, one of the ministers gave money, to knock up another house to get more drink. When he came home, his wife asked him, how he could answer his mispending the evening of the Lord's day so; he replied, he had been with two ministers, and he did but as they did.

Then when he lived at large himself, he was very severe against the dissenters; but when he saw the errors of his ways, he was troubled for it, and became very moderate towards them. Hearing them often reviled by those, who themselves led bad lives, he set himself to inquire concerning them, acquainted himself with some of them, and looked into their books, and found they were not the men they were represented to be, but men worthy to be loved; and then, though he continued in full and constant communion with the church to his dying day, he was himself reproached as a presbyterian; which very much confirmed him in his good opinion of them: "For" (says he) "our high churchmen will scarce admit of one serious Christian among us; for if a man begin to have that character, he is branded with the title of a presbyterian." Certainly they cannot do the presbyterians a greater kindness, nor the church of England a greater diskindness, than using such language.

It grieved him to hear some make such a noise against those whom he knew to be good Christians, calling them schismatics, when they themselves who made that noise, he thought unfit for so great a charge of souls, by reason of their immoralities, their small qualifications, or their envious, unchristian, malicious tempers. He wondered how men could make so light a matter of souls, as by their unnecessary impositions, to force men either to a sinful compliance, or (as they call it) a "damnable schism." Upon his reading the conference at the Savoy, between the bishops and the ministers, commissioned by King Charles II. he told his minister his judgment was, that the fault of our divisions lay at those bishops' door, who had power, and might have prevented them.

He prayed often for the healing of our divisions, and comforted himself with those words of the learned Bishop Stillingfleet; "God will one day convince men, that the union of the church lies more in the unity of faith and affection, than in uniformity of doubtful rites and ceremonies."

XIV. His spiritual improvement of common occurrences.

Some of the many occasional good thoughts which we meet with in his papers we shall set down.

Nov. 1st. 1699. "This, I understand, is my birthday. I now enter upon my climacteric year sixty-three, a year in which it has been observed that many die: I have found, in reading lives, that Tertullian, St. Bernard, Luther, Melancthon, Justus, Jonas, and many others, died in that year of their lives. Death is a debt I owe, and must pay ere long, whenever the great God demands it. Lord, I am willing to submit to thy holy will; do with me what thou pleasest. My time is short, my work is great, my strength is small. Lord, help me to improve that short minute of time which yet remains."

"I have lately set my house in order; and, I hope, have made an honest and equal distribution of that worldly estate my good God hath given me, endeavouring, in all things, to die with a good conscience, which will be comfortable in a dying hour."

"I have now past one month of the doubtful year, and am so much nearer my end. I endeavour to stand upon my guard, and to watch, because I am uncertain when my Lord cometh."

At the latter end of the following summer he writes, "Now the days begin to shorten, an emblem of my estate; my days decline; winter and death are coming on; wise men provide for both. Most men take care of their bodies and earthly concerns; but most wise and happy is that man that takes due care of his soul, and his eternal concerns, that in health prepares for sickness and death."

At the return of the year he writes: "I have now out-lived the doubtful year; and, I praise God, have meditated more of death this year than formerly; and, I hope, shall continue to do so all the days of my life. Death will come, and that ere long. The young may die, but the old must die. A friend of mine, not long since, said, rejoicingly, "Now I have outlived my climacteric year, I hope I may live a great while;" but he died the year following. And I know death hath the same power over me this year that he had the last, only waits for a commission from him, in whose hand are all men's lives; nay, I cannot assure myself of one day, so uncertain is the life; and the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. I hope I shall never live out of the expectation of death, while I continue on earth. Lord, help me to watch and pray. My glass is still running, my dissolution draws near, but the time is uncertain; therefore I must wait the Lord's leisure, whose creature I am, and to whom I owe all possible obedience,—his time is the best time."

When he entered upon his seventieth year, he writes, "I may very well expect death may seize me before this year be ended: I find great decays in myself of late, so that the time of my dissolution must of necessity draw near. Should I outlive this year, and God should add more days and years to my life, I am sensible they would be but labour and sorrow, as Moses speaks; but I will refer all to my merciful Father, and resign myself wholly to his will and pleasure. It is high time to bestir myself; for the day is far spent, and the night is coming, when I must work no more. I am now arrived near the end of my journey: I have almost done with the world, and the world with me: I have hitherto passed without any signal troubles; and if now, in the close of my days, God gently lays his afflicting hand upon me, I have no reason to complain; but must own it is what I have deserved, and it is good for me that I have been afflicted. No man is more miserable than he that has no adversity."

"Such a time there was great cock-fighting and horse-races about the town; but I saw none of them, having a more serious concern in hand, to prepare for my great change. What will all the pleasures of this world avail us, when we come to lie upon a death-bed?"

When he had completed his seventieth year. "Lord," (says he,) "make me wise to salvation: teach me so to number the few minutes of my time that yet remain, that they may be spent to thy glory, and the benefit of my own immortal soul. I have lived much longer than ever I expected. Lord, as thou hast given me length of days, with much comfort and contentment, grant me the joys and comforts of thine everlasting kingdom for Christ's sake." Jan. 1st. "Lord, as thou hast given me life and health to enter upon a new year, so I pray thee give me a new heart, renew a right spirit within me, order all my affections according to thy will, that I may love what thou lovest, and hate what thou hatest; that I may abominate all my old sins, and may become a new creature in Jesus Christ; that I may spend the ensuing year to thy glory, and the good of my own soul. One year passeth away, and another comes; and still I am nearer the time of my dissolution: as the old year is expired, Lord, grant that all my sins may expire; as the new year is begun, Lord, give me a new heart, and new and earnest desires, to persevere in godliness all the days of my life."

"Old Mr. Henry desired, that if it were the will of God, he might live no longer than he was useful; and my desire is, that I may not live so long as to be troublesome."

"Now autumn is come. The days grow short, so doth my life; it declines every day, and is near expiring. It is the greatest wisdom, in time of health and strength, to prepare for sickness and death: he that really doth so, his business of dying is half done. A diseased, pained body will unfit the mind for holy duties; therefore it is good to labour in health, and make our peace with God then. Gray

hairs tells us, as the golden leaves on the trees in autumn, that our fall is near, and it is highly dangerous to defer our repentance to the last. Many on their death-bed are sorely handled; some seized in their heads, and rendered insensible; and how can the great work be done then? A virtuous life never thought ill of death. A good conscience, and a well-grounded hope of salvation, will encourage a dying man: yet good men may be oppressed with doubts and fears upon a death-bed, and go to heaven even by hell-gates."

One year he writes: "There is a great show of a plentiful crop this year; which yet our God, if he pleaseth, can deprive us of. The famous Mr. Hooker, (as I have read in his life,) when he was offered a benefice in London, desired rather to have a country parsonage, where he might see the blessings of God spring out of the earth. And a pleasant thing it is to see the fruits of the earth spring up, grow, and in a little time come to maturity. O that we may not set our hearts too much upon those things, so as to neglect the main business."

Another year he writes: "We have had a plentiful crop, and good harvest weather: What shall we render to the Lord for his mercies? Lord, with these, give us thy grace, and peace, and truth, in our days."

He records an awakening providence, which fell out to his great grief: "This day a dear friend of mine was suddenly killed by a fall from his horse. He was well and dead in a moment. O how uncertain is the life of man! Lord, imprint this upon my heart, that I may bear it in my mind, while I have a day to live; and may watch and pray, because I know not at what hour my Lord comes. O that I may from henceforward be more diligent than ever in making preparation for death, that whether it be natural or violent, sudden or slow, it may be happy."

About the same time, a young man wickedly set himself to drink brandy to that excess, that he died upon the spot, a self-murderer. And another lusty young man suddenly fell down dead in his master's shop, and never spoke a word more. These three sad accidents happened in and about Nantwich, in less than three weeks' time. On which he writes, "How foolish are they that set their hearts upon this world, which we are to look upon as an enemy, that will flatter us with its pleasures, but will deceive us, will kiss, and kill. We have heard of many that have spent their time very ill, yet, at their death, have had their eyes opened, and their consciences awakened; one crying out, 'Call time again!' Another, 'Alas! my life is done, and my work is undone!' Another, 'O that God would try me once again!' O that men were of the same mind now, that they will be of then! and do that which they will wish they had done, when it is too late!"

"Such a time Mr. Bromfield preached excellently of repentance, and the danger of delaying it, at the funeral of a young man struck dead with lightning in a moment, in his full strength. It was indeed a thunder-clap, for warning to us all that are left behind, to watch always; for who knows what a day, what an hour, what a minute may bring forth."

"Though death doth not come suddenly to all, yet it comes unexpected to many, and unwelcome to most: but, as Archbishop Tillotson saith of Mr. Gouge's death, 'To him no death could be sudden, because the constant employment of his life, was the best preparation for death;' so that it was rather a favour and blessing; the more sudden, the more easy."

"Such a day my mother-in-law died, (in 1708,) the only person, save one, that has died in my family of thirty-six years; and now it has pleased God, by death, to make a breach in my family; how it may proceed, the only wise God knows, who doth all things well, to whom I humbly submit myself, trusting in him, that he will give me strength and patience to bear whatever he is pleased to inflict upon me, living or dying; for he is my merciful Father."

"O let me not lose one moment of this precious time; let me not waste it in idle trifles and folly, but employ every moment of it in doing that work, which my Father hath sent me to do. If I do this, my time, how short soever, will be long enough; but if I squander it away in doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose, I shall find the want of it when it is too late."

As he thus improved the occurrences of his own time, so he delighted very much in reading church-history, especially the lives of good men, both ancients and moderns, and made large collections out of them. "It is my delight to read the lives of good men, and my earnest desire to imitate their good examples: the Lord enable me so to do."

He read with much affection the lives of the martyrs, admiring what they suffered for their dear Lord and Master. "Methinks, (says he,) I that have lived to a sufficient age (then near sixty-two) should embrace a natural death willingly, when so many, in the midst of their days, have, with great joy and satisfaction, suffered cruel and violent deaths, and have declared they would rather die than live. A well-grounded hope of salvation will make a death-bed easy." He gathered many things that were very helpful to him out of the life of Mr. Philip Henry.

Having collected many excellent passages out of Mr. Burghal's book, called, "The perfect way to die in peace." He adds, "I knew Mr. Burghal of Acton very well: he was a serious godly divine, was cast out of his living at Acton on black Bartholomew-Day, 1662, among a great number of his pious brethren all England over. The more the pity. I have heard him preach often; once in Nant-

wich church a soul-searching sermon, that did much affect me."

XV. His desire of retiring from the hurry of worldly business.

When he grew near seventy years of age, he grew very weary of the hurry of the world. "It hath been my desire (says he) several years, to desist from business, and retire into privacy, that I might give myself wholly to the great work of preparing for the world that is to come. I have often wished, and am still of the same mind, that I were in some private place, where I knew none, and none knew me, provided it were a place where piety was practised; I would fain make an end with the world, before death thrusts me out of it."

He had designed it several years before, but it was not till a little more than a year before his death, that he removed from his dwelling in the country into the town of Nantwich, that he might be free from the encumbrance of the world, which he found had been an hinderance to him in his soul's concerns, and that he might be near the church. He was sensible the town had more temptations of another kind, which had formerly been sometimes too hard for him; but he put his trust in the grace of God, to deliver him from them, and armed himself with these considerations: "If I should now relapse, and return with the dog to his vomit, how miserable would my condition be! I should account myself a cast-away, and undone to all eternity, and it had been better I had never known the way of righteousness; *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways.* I must daily watch and pray, lest I enter into temptation: and happy they, whose last days are their best days, and their last good works more than the first."

He reserved but very little to maintain himself; but said, "I have enough of this world, and as much as I desire; and now I hope not to remove again, till I am removed by death; which, I suppose, will be in a very short time. Lord, thy will be done in all things, whether life or death."

Some time after his removal into the town, he wrote thus: "I praise the Lord, I find much comfort and satisfaction in my late removal: I am quit from a great deal of worldly care and trouble, which I have been a long time cumbered with. O then, (my soul,) since I am retired into privacy, according to my desire, let me strive and endeavour, all that in me lies, to make the best use of it, that I may more and more contemn the things of this vain world, and set my affections on things above."

Yet still he found his true rest was not in this world. All our removals, while we are on this side Canaan, are but from one wilderness to another. It is in the future state, not in this, that there is a true and everlasting rest remaining for the people of God.

XVI. His advice to his grandchildren.

He directs one of his little books to his three grand-daughters. "My blessing (says he) I freely give you; and my earnest prayers are to Almighty God, that he will bestow his blessing and grace upon you, that you may live holy and die happy. This is the earnest desire of your poor aged grandfather. I am not capable to give you that advice that I fain would; however, I will do my best, and hope you will all take notice of it, and observe it, when I lie rotting in the dust.

"In the first place, and above all things, serve the Lord in spirit and in truth; love him with all your heart; count all things here below of no value, in comparison of God and Christ; be careful to keep God's holy laws and commandments; be frequent in prayer, and hearing the word. He that will taste the love of God, must be no stranger to meditation and prayer, and must not be cold or inconstant in them, but dwell and walk above with God. He must be wholly addicted to improve the talent he is intrusted with. His design and trade on earth must be to do all the good he can, and to keep his soul clean from the flesh and worldly vanities, and to such a soul, God will make known his love. Good children, I entreat you again and again to serve God, and then he will bless you; live religious lives, then you will be happy here and hereafter too. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth; for godliness is great gain; as you sow, you will be sure to reap. Think not to do ill, and yet hope that all will end well. I love both your bodies and souls, and would have you do well for both, by living in the fear of God."

"Have a special care of your reputation; for it is better than precious ointment, and rather to be chosen than great riches. Remember the verse you learned;

> Thy credit wary keep, its quickly gone;
> By many actions got, but lost by one.

"The way to get and keep a good name, is to live in the fear of God; to be modest, and chaste, and virtuous, will please your God, rejoice your friends, and turn to your own comfort. I charge you all, in the name of God, to take heed of the society of vain, loose young fellows; let not such come into your company, nor scarce into your sight, or thoughts, but flee from them as from a lion or a bear."

"Earnestly implore divine grace to guide, counsel, and establish you; for without that we can do nothing. Remember, God's eye is ever and every where upon you. Endeavour to live in godly families; dwell where God dwells, and be in such company as you hope to be with in heaven; then at death you will only change your place, not your company. As death leaves us, judgment will find us. Nothing flies so swiftly, as the soul out of the

body. Eternity hangs on a moment, for such is our life. Ask your hearts every night what you have done this day, because any night may be your last: work, pray, believe, repent, get assurance of heaven, and be happy for ever. Earthly comforts are short-lived; riches have wings, beauty is but skin-deep; all is but vanity. A frothy wit and a vicious life will carry directly to atheism, which is the master-mischief of this age. Thoughts are not free, nor words kind; they will both judge us another day. Get ready for death; it is a great word to say upon good grounds, *I dare die.* Redeem time, for how cutting will the remembrance of good hours ill-spent be!

"Be obedient, loving, and dutiful to your father; take his advice in all your concerns, both spiritual and temporal. O that you would all of you be as great a comfort to your father as he hath been to me. He is now above forty years of age, and I can truly say he never vexed or grieved me in his life, but was always dutiful, loving, and obedient to me. I must own that he hath been a great assistance to me in my spiritual warfare: be you sure that you all strive to rejoice and comfort your father's heart, as he hath rejoiced and comforted mine."

"As to your mother, you had but little knowledge of her. It pleased God to take her out of a troublesome world, when you were but infants. She was a pious, modest, good woman. I pray God you may be like her; and that her virtues may, by the grace of God, be stamped upon all your hearts. She was a pattern of piety and patience. From a child she was discreet and serious, not in the least given to pride or vanity. In disposing of herself, she took the advice of her pious and judicious parents. She was of a solid, serious disposition, and mighty cautious what company she entertained, or came into.

"Good children, as you tender your own good, or expect the blessing of God, and comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter, do not slight or despise the advice or counsel of a poor dying grandfather. Though I yet live, it cannot be long, this being the sixty-seventh year of my age; therefore I am daily expecting and preparing for my great change, which you may observe, if you will take the pains to read over the following weak meditations; and as I wrote them for my private use, I desire they may not be exposed to the scorn of bad people."

"Dear children, I shall conclude my weak advice with some few profitable texts of Scripture. Rom. viii. 13. *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* Heb. xiii. 16. *To do good, and to communicate, forget not.* Ps. l. 22. *Now consider this, ye that forget God.* Deut. xxxii. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end,*



"Now the God of all mercy, power, and love, bless you all, and keep you in his true faith and fear, in the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, for evermore. Amen."

XVII. His expectation of, and preparation for, death.

This was indeed the chief subject of the papers he wrote. One might collect a little volume of his serious thoughts about death, and the passages he wrote referring to this. It was the sense he had of death approaching, that put him upon all this concern about his soul, and he had the comfort of it in his dying hours.

"Sept. 6, 1698. It is my serious thought, and heart's desire, to note down, or compose, something in way of preparation for my approaching dissolution. I am now above sixty, my head hoary, my eyes dim, my strength fails, the chips fly off, and the tree must fall. It is great wisdom in all to prepare for death, especially the aged. The young *may*, the old *must*, die. It is an unwelcome messenger to most men; but it is great folly to strive against such a stream, and neglect a work that must be done. Death is most certain, and nothing more necessary than a due caring for the soul, and a serious preparation for the hour of death, and the day of judgment, which is my real purpose. Good Lord, for thy mercy's sake, direct and assist me in this most great and necessary work, by thy Holy Spirit, that I may persevere in this my duty, all the days of my life, till my change come. To this end, it is my design to collect some texts of Scripture that treat of death and judgment; also the sayings of some good men, and my own weak sentiments adapted to my own condition: *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayers. Cast me not off in the time of old age. Be not far from me, O my God, make haste to help me.* Now, *when I am old and gray-headed, forsake me not. Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Job xiv. 14. *If a man die, shall he live again?* &c. Rev. xiii. 14. *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,* &c. Ps. lxxxix. 48. *What man is he that lives, and shall not see death?* Gen. iii. 19. *Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.* Isa. lx. 6. *All flesh is grass.* Jam. iv. 14. *What is your life but a vapour?* Ps. xxxix. 5. *Every man at his best estate is vanity.* Matt. xxiv. 44. *Watch, therefore. Few days and full of trouble. Lord, make me to know my end.* Heb. ix. 27. *After death, the judgment.* Eccl. xii. 14. *God shall bring every work into judgment.* 2 Cor. v. 10. *We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.*"

"It has been my earnest desire and endeavour to leave sin before it leave me. Who will not arm himself against an enemy that threatens every hour? Our breath is in the hand of God: we may be well one moment, and dead the next. Many have gone well to bed, and been dead before morning. The time

when, the place where, the manner how, are all uncertain. Many are taken away, not only in the midst of their days, but in the midst of their sins. It is my earnest desire to make my peace with God in time of health; that I may not have oil to buy when I should burn it. It is dangerous deferring repentance; that makes a death-bed uneasy, and dying hours uncomfortable."

"Mr. George Herbert, on his death-bed, said, 'I am sorry I have nothing to present to my merciful God but sin and misery; but the first is pardoned, and a few hours will put a period to the latter.'"

"He that lives well cannot die ill; but he that lives without fear shall die without hope: he that hath no grace in his life, can have no true peace in his death. The longest day has its night, and the longest life has its death; that man's soul is in no good case, that is loth to think of dying."

"When death calls, I believe I shall be as willing to go as flesh and blood will allow; for I am willing to part with every thing in this world. I desire to live in continual expectation of death; for that will make a man more careful to serve God, and will make a pious life the more pleasant; it will check inordinate desires of the world, and it is our Saviour's express command, *Watch always.*"

"It is a serious thing to die: it is a work by itself. A dying friend once said to me, 'It is a hard thing to die.' It was the saying of one; 'If thy youth have been faulty, it is a comfort if thy age be otherwise.' It is bad to be wicked, but worse to continue so."

"What thoughts hast thou of thy dying hour, and thy departing soul? It must ere long be required of thee; will Christ receive it? Hast thou made sure of that? If not, thou hast done nothing, but art undone to all eternity. If life be of such value as we think it is, what are our souls worth? But we are earnest in pursuing shadows, and let go the substance; we busy ourselves about trifles, and neglect the most weighty matters."

"July 15, 1700. I desire it may be my daily practice while I live, and am capable, to meditate something of death, and of my dying hours." Mr. B. in his treatise of self-denial, gives many reasons why we should submit to death, and be willing to die. 'Our lives are not our own, but his that doth require them, and he is Lord of them. The greatest potentates must undergo the stroke of death. All things in heaven and earth are at God's disposal: he gives and takes life at pleasure. How many beasts, birds, and fishes die, to feed us! The best saints have trodden this path before us. Our Lord Jesus drank of this bitter cup, to conquer death, and unsting it for us: the best may be afraid, but death puts an end to all their fears; it is joy when it is over. We should be willing to leave this wicked world, to go to the glorious society above. One would think these considerations sufficient to make any Christian willing to part with life freely."

And afterwards he writes, "It is the greatest wisdom, in time of health and strength, to prepare for sickness and death: he that really doth so, his dying work is half done. I ought to do so more especially now; for my parents both died before my age. I had three brothers, and all dead; and this is my climacteric year. I desire, that thoughts of death may fill me daily, that I may make it familiar to me."

—— "One says, O foolish soul, I wish thou wert as covetous after eternity, as thou art after a fading, perishing life; and after the blessed presence of God, as thou art for continuance with earth and sin. Did we but love God as strongly as the worldling doth his wealth, or the ambitious man his honours, we should not be so loth to leave the world, and go to God. Turn thy thoughts from the vanities of this world; set thyself to study eternity, and busy thyself about the life to come; labour to get your hearts into heaven, and doubtless yourselves will follow after shortly."

—— "I have here no abiding city. Let me not set my affections on the things of this world; let me often consider, that this poor body of mine shall become as noisome as the vilest carrion, must be laid in the earth, and become a prey to worms; but my soul shall still live to all eternity. Death hath no power over that immortal part. I praise the Lord, and it doth rejoice my heart, that I have of late fallen into this method of considering and meditating much on my latter end."

—— "I often see younger and stronger than I go before me; yet it must be my lot ere long. Forbearance is no acquittance; death will not be put off, or bribed."

——"It is the greatest concern of life to prepare for death; but, alas! it is too much neglected by the most of men, who put the evil day far off, and promise themselves long life, when they know not what a day may bring forth. They that will not remember death, death will be sure to remember them; and they that put off the thoughts of death, will certainly be surprised at last, and seized unawares, to their everlasting amazement. O deceitful hopes, how many have you deluded! And while you promise men old age, you have cut them off in their youth. Then all the treasures, pleasures, and honours of the world will avail nothing: then, to have the favour of God, an interest in Christ, and a good conscience, are the things that will stand us in stead, and make a death-bed easy. Good Lord, in mercy help me, that I not only write these good things in my book, but may practise them."

—— "I doubt too many never think of dying till their dying day comes; and then what would they give to escape it? Then what promises of new obedience, which yet prove abortive, like Pharaoh's!

Many are like seamen; they never seek God for help, as long as they are able to help themselves. O my soul, remember death, remember that eternity, which thou mayst begin to-day, or to-morrow, but never end."

—— "One says, I must be at God's disposal, whether I will or no: there is no rest for souls, but in the will of God. Our own wills have undone us; they have misgoverned us; they are our greatest enemies, our disease, our prison, our death, till they are brought over to the will of God. There is no true peace or felicity, but in the conformity of our wills to the will of God."

—— "To prepare for my great change is my chief concern in this world; it is an important business of a high nature; it is the concern of my soul, which is of more value than all the world. Mr. Shower has many excellent sayings suited to my present purpose. The life of man is short and fleeting; our days on earth few and uncertain: how careful then should I be to manage every hour well! All the time that is past is irrecoverable, and the little that remains flies apace: how quickly will it be gone! How suddenly may an unexpected stroke of death conclude it! And this is all the opportunity I have of making my peace with God, and preparing for an everlasting world. I can have no business of greater moment, than to secure the happiness of my soul in another world; for what will all other business signify in the end, if this be neglected? but how have I trifled away my precious time in sloth and idleness, in foolish mirth and hurtful company, in vain thoughts and impertinent discourses! Lord, make these meditations effectual, to prevent my loss of time for the future, which, sooner or later, will be esteemed precious. O how swift, how short, is my time of trial, in order to eternity! How difficult, how important, a work is it to prepare for an everlasting state! What is all this world! how little, what a mere nothing, to a departing soul? And shall I continue to pursue shadows, and please myself with empty dreams, being so near my final judgment?

"Let me therefore endeavour to impress the consideration of death and eternity, as at hand, more deeply on my heart, that I may walk and live, may discourse and pray, and demean myself in every thing, as near an unchangeable state. My time is near an end; I must shortly take death by the cold hand; Lord, direct and assist me in this great concern."

—— "Remember this, (O man,) that *dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.* This is a mourning verse, which God himself delivered to Adam. Thou art but a bubble; thy life as the passing of a shadow. Why dost thou heap up riches, O thou covetous wretch, when as this night thy wealth may be taken from thee, or thou from it."

—— "I praise God, the thoughts of death are often in my mind, and my great change still before my eyes. My time is short, my days that remain are but few; yet, I fear, I do not make that preparation for death that I ought *In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells no good thing. To will is present, but how to perform that which is good I know not.*"

—— "I may well expect the summons of death every day: the most earnest business I can set about, is to prepare for it; and, in order to that, to consider often how it will be with me, when I lie gasping and groaning upon my death-bed."

—— "Therefore I often think of death, because it is my earnest desire, that when it comes it may not be terrible to me. Death has some terror in it, therefore I would learn how not to fear it. The way never to fear death, is always to think of it."

"To meditate on mortality is necessary for all, especially the aged. Our glass is always running, and now almost run out: our time always going, and now almost gone; we have one foot in the grave; death stands daily over our heads, ready to strike: I ought therefore to say, this day I stand at the door of eternity, because we die daily. Still think of thy hour-glass."

—— "I often think of death, but cannot live up to what those thoughts require as I would, and should, nor perform my duty to God with such life and zeal as I ought. O my soul, think what will all the world avail a dying man! The peace with God, and peace of conscience, are of more value than all the world."

—— "The learned Salmasius said upon his death-bed, 'O! I have lost a world of time; time, that most precious thing in the world, whereof had I but one year more, it should be spent in David's psalms and Paul's epistles.' O sirs! mind the world less, and God more. The fear of God is true wisdom."

—— "I see or hear every day of the death of one or other younger than myself; they go to the grave before me; I survive, but am in expectation. I know the lot will fall on me whenever it pleaseth God. I hope I shall with meekness and patience submit to the will of my heavenly Father, and freely resign my soul to him that gave it."

—— "One says, To thee, O my Saviour, I commit my soul: it is thine by redemption, thine by covenant, sealed by thy Spirit: thou hast promised not to lose it, hast promised rest to weary souls. Lord, I am not only weary of suffering, but weary of sin, weary of the flesh, weary of my darkness, dulness, distance; weary of this wicked, blind, unrighteous world; and whither should I look for rest but homewards to my heavenly Father. To thee I am but a bruised reed, but thou wilt not break me: I am but smoking flax, but thou wilt not quench what thy grace has kindled."

—— "O let me not be surprised, and think it strange when death seizes me, and throws me upon

a sick and dying bed; then let me submit to my Father's good pleasure, and resign myself up to him. I have fair warning given me by the death of others, day after day, time after time, to prepare for my great change: Lord, direct and assist me in this great concern. I have here no abiding city, and therefore seek one to come; for how can I be in love with this world, which is so vain, sinful, and uncertain."

—— "Have not we seen and known some that have been suddenly struck, sound and sick, quick and dead, in the space of one hour and less; how dare we then defer our repentance? Death may seize us in our delays, and deliver us up into eternity. Lord, grant that every day I may remember my last day, may every day take a turn or two with death; so shall I be acquainted with its face, and not feel its sting. To trust to a death-bed repentance, is a very high affront to Almighty God: what do those make of him, who think to live in sin all their days, and then expect pardon when they can live no longer?"

—— "Dr. Taylor says, We complain our life is short, yet we throw away much of it. We want company, seek out arts to drive the time away, and then weep, because the time is gone too soon. He that desires to die well, must not live a soft voluptuous life."

—— "An idle man is never ready to die, and is glad of any excuse: a busy man hath always something unfinished, and is ready for every thing but death: but remember, thou must carry no more out of the world than thou broughtest in; therefore be satisfied with a little; thou must be gone shortly, eternity is always at hand."

—— "I often resolve to observe these good instructions which I read and write, but am too often disappointed, and taken off by worldly business. Such are my present concerns, being born to no estate, that I must pay my rent, and make necessary provision for my family, and this will not be done without care and pains in worldly business; yet I count all things here below but dross and dung, in comparison with God and Christ: on them I desire to set my heart and affection."

—— "One says, The raising up of the soul to God is indeed the greatest work; but the mortifying of the flesh, and denying self, is surely the next to it; for selfishness is the most treacherous, deceitful enemy in the world; and, of all views, the hardest both to find out, and cast out. The world is so great with some men, that God and everlasting life are as nothing: they are so full of the creature, that they have no room for the Creator; so busy about earth, that they have but little time for heaven. Lord, let my meditations of death prove effectual, to wean me from the world, and to make me live a holy life, without which my meditating, speaking, and writing of death, will avail me little. Lord, work in me both to will and to do of thy good pleasure."

—— "I am told, that if I be heartily concerned about my soul and eternity, and carefully seek the favour of God through Christ; if I strive against sin, make conscience of my words and ways, and have respect to all God's commandments, I have reason to hope, that notwithstanding my daily infirmities, my spiritual state is good. I think I can truly say, that I neither love nor delight in any sin, and desire always to be found in the way of my duty. Lord, grant I may not deceive myself."

—— "One says, It is my certain duty to seek heaven with all the fervour of my soul, and diligence of my life. Everlasting glory should be preferred before perishing vanity. I am sure this world will shortly be nothing to me, and therefore it is next to nothing now. Either joy or misery is near at hand to every man. This should awaken us to cry, to search, to beg, to strive, to watch, to spare no care, or cost, or labour, to make all sure in a matter of such weight. This should be done with speed, with zeal and earnestness, and a full resolution of soul. Who can stand dallying, as most men do, at the door of eternity, when they believe their immortal souls must be there shortly?"

"I cannot say that I am prepared for death as I ought to be, but am endeavouring it the best I can. I am sensible that my time on earth is short and uncertain. Mr. Fox says, 'You gray-headed sinners, against whom death hath raised his batteries, you have but a few sands in your glass, your departing hour cannot be far off; your candle is in the socket, and will be a stinking snuff shortly; the next blast the house may fall. You that lean on staves, and look through your spectacles, you are just ready to enter into eternity; if you do not mind your great work immediately, woe, woe be to you for ever! Poor mortals, since you cannot prevent death, make all the preparation you can for it; for it is the grand business of this life.' These good sayings of Mr. Fox I often consult, and am much affected with them. I take them to be spoken to myself; for I am under those symptoms of old age he mentions." On this occasion he writes these verses, which we will insert, though divers such pieces of his plain poetry we have omitted:

My head is gray, my time is almost spent;
Prepare for death, O wicked heart, repent.
When death doth call away, then go I must,
My soul to God, my body to the dust.
Christ died for me, my hope is fixed there;
I hope in mercy, yet I live in fear.
I fear my God, yet other fears I have;
I've broke his laws, why should he own and save
A wicked one, that spent his days in sin,
That knew his word, and what's contain'd therein!

In mercy pardon all I've done amiss,
Through Christ, my Lord, my happiness and bliss.

——" I am now at the last stage of my life; I may well expect the summons of death every day; my time is even at an end; O let not me be one of those that desire to die the death of the righteous, but will not live the life of the righteous; but let it be my chief care, my earnest endeavour, to serve God, and please him, lest death should come upon me like a thief in the night, or surprise me at midnight, as the bridegroom did the sleeping virgins that had no oil."

" Mr. Gouge says, ' O sinner, it had been better for thee never to have been born, than not to be born again; it is as necessary as heaven and happiness. I beseech thee, for thy precious soul's sake, stir up thyself to work out thy salvation.' This is excellent advice; Lord, give me grace to take it."

——" I will not for a few merry hours hazard my eternal safety; I desire not to flatter myself, or think better of my state than it is; but would judge myself, that I may not be judged of the Lord; for, as old Mr. Henry used to say, when we set our sins before our faces in repentance and confession, God casts them behind his back in pardon and remission; but if we carelessly cast them behind our back, God justly sets them before his face."

——" Whether we are ready or unready, death will not stay; it is the greatest change that can pass upon us; it carries us from all present enjoyments, turns the body to dust, brings the soul into the presence of God, removes us from time to eternity. The awfulness of the change should make us careful to get ready; and it is no easy thing to prepare, as we should, for death. The whole time of our life is not more than sufficient; we have no time to lose or squander away; we have many sins to repent of, many graces to obtain, temptations to resist, difficulties to break through, duties to perform: we must get our guilt removed, our hearts purified, our natures refined; the image of God impressed on us, and all our corruptions mortified. O strive to live much in a little time: live apace in this sense; despatch the great business of life out of hand." This paragraph he gleaned out of Mr. Calamy's sermon on the death of Mr. Sylvester.

——" Meditation of death hath been my frequent practice many years; but, as Mr. Burghal says, it is but lost labour, unless that meditation draw us to serious preparation for it. Bishop Patrick says, O let it please my God, to strengthen me in my holy resolutions, till I arrive at his heavenly court: O let his Spirit breathe upon me, and carry away my soul in holy desires towards him; let him guide my course through this troublesome sea, on which I am tossed, and bring me safe to a quiet haven of eternal rest and peace."

——" Death, and preparation for it, I desire to make the chief subjects of my meditation, according to my weak and mean capacity. I hope my merciful Father will accept me, who knows my frame, and remembers I am but dust. A religious life is certainly the happiest life we can live in this world: it is pleasant while we live, and comfortable when we die; it makes a death-bed easy."

——" God in his great wisdom hath left us all at uncertainties, as to the time of our death, that we may be always on our guard, and improve our time. Let us frequently put this question to ourselves, Where must I be for ever? I have lived so long, what have I done all this while? Do I find myself better than I was some years ago? Am I more heavenly-minded? Do I prepare for another world before I am called out of this?"

About two months before he died, he began to read Monsieur Drelincourt's *Consolation against the fear of death.* " I propose" (says he) " to transcribe several things out of it, since it is a book which treats much of death; for such books I have studied much of late years." The last thing he wrote in his book, and we suppose the last he ever wrote, was a prayer proper for one dying, out of Drelincourt.

*June* 1, 1709, (which was about ten days before he died,) he thus wrote: " It hath been my desire these many years, to prepare for my death: to that end, I have used my best endeavours to make my peace with God. It is my great comfort, that I have taken this method for eight or ten years, to be always expecting death's approach. These endeavours I have used with much weakness and imperfection, so that I may well say I am but an unprofitable servant. If my heart doth not much deceive me, I desire to renounce all things, and to rest only upon Christ: Lord, what need have I of thy grace and favour, and the assistance of thy Holy Spirit! which I humbly beg, for the sake of my blessed Lord and Saviour."

Almost every page of his books hath some passage or other concerning death. Over his chamber door was written *Memento mori—Remember death.* Many of those Scriptures which speak of death, he got fairly written, and hung in a frame, with a death's head under them.

XVIII. The meditations and prayers which he prepared for the use of his death-bed.

He began these about 1700, and continued them at times after: he called to his son to read them to him a few hours before he died.

" I am going the way of all flesh, and find that death is very near me, and I am now launching into eternity. What may be the issue of this illness, God knows, who is only wise.—I am often assaulted with doubts and fears concerning the state of my precious soul, which is my chief concern; yet I hope I shall never despair of the mercies of God, for

they are infinite, and the sufferings of Christ are meritorious. Here is my main stay and strength: here is the hope of my salvation."

"I humbly confess, to my shame and sorrow, that my sins have been many and great: I cannot plead innocency of life, no, nor justify the best of my actions, but acknowledge myself sinful, and an unprofitable servant. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death? None but Christ, none but Christ."

"My only hope and comfort is, I have to do with a merciful God, who will abundantly pardon all penitent sinners; and a blessed Saviour, who hath redeemed me with his precious blood, and is now interceding with his Father in my behalf: O what a comfort is this to a poor doubting sinner."

"I will say, with Mr. Gearing, 'O Lord, thy Son hath offered satisfaction, and thou hast accepted it.—Thou, O my Saviour, hast laid down thy life for mine; and thy Father and my Father is well pleased with it. Blood is paid, justice is satisfied, heaven doors are widened, thy arms open to receive me, nothing wanting but my heart. Make it such as thou wouldst have it, (good Lord,) then take it to thyself. I have sinned against mercy, but not above mercy; for thou art a God of infinite mercy to all that repent."

"Lord, I owe thee a death, O let it not be terrible! Then take thy own time. What shall I say or do to make my peace with God, whom I have so much offended: Lord, I repent of all my sins from the very bottom of my heart; I will, with sorrow and shame, confess them, and will beg pardon and forgiveness of my merciful Father; I will cast myself on the rock Christ Jesus, my only Saviour, who laid down his life to save my precious soul; blessed be God for Jesus Christ, the inestimable gift. Lord, increase my faith, without which it is impossible to please thee."

"Why should I be loth to part from this troublesome world, or unwilling to die, and enter into those joys which my blessed Saviour hath purchased for me? All this is for want of assurance: doubts and fears are apt to arise; yet *in thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.*"

"O merciful Lord God, whenever thou pleasest to cast me upon my sick-bed, and bring the bitter pangs of death upon me, then be with me, support and comfort me in that time of my distress; strengthen me and help me, that I may have power to resist my enemy, who may strongly assault me when I am weakest: O bring me through that great trial with some ease and comfort; and, for thy mercy's sake, lay no more upon me than I am able to bear; for thou knowest my frame. When thou requirest my soul, embrace it in the arms of thy tender mercy: let thy good angels guard it into its everlasting rest, for Christ's sake."

"Lord, give me wisdom from above, that I may duly consider the shortness and uncertainty of life. Give me grace to make preparation for the hour of death, which time draws very near. It is my resolution, by divine assistance, to submit to the will and pleasure of my merciful Father. *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* If he lay his hand heavy upon me, I confess it is my deserts; if he be favourable, it is his mercy and goodness: therefore I hope I shall never repine at the Lord's dealing, nor despair of his mercies."

"When pain, and sickness, and anguish beset me on every side, and death seizeth me, then let me call to mind the sufferings of my dear Saviour for my sins, though he committed no sin; how his precious body was torn, and his precious blood spilt, yet he patiently bore all with submission to his Father's will: and shall not I, a poor, sinful, vile, wretched creature, patiently suffer whatever the only wise God pleaseth to lay upon me? Then let me call to mind the folly and wickedness of my younger days, even the sins of my whole life. Sins bring all miseries upon us: *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. Correct me, O Lord, but with judgment, not in thy anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.* I have deserved thy hot displeasure, but, Lord, in judgment remember mercy, and comfort thy poor servant in distress."

"Truly my soul waits upon God; from him comes my salvation. Thy loving-kindness is better than life. Lord, help me in this trouble, be merciful to me, for my soul trusteth in thee: in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge."

"*Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness,* &c. Ps. li. 1—3. It is my greatest trouble that I have sinned against so good a God; yet this comforts me, That *a troubled spirit, a broken contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord. Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies. Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me,* Ps. xxv. 16—18.

"When the pains of death get hold of me, then, good Lord, give me sense to pray, and patience to bear what thou layest upon me; then be thou with me, and comfort me for thy mercy's sake. Prayer and patience are the best remedies for a dying man: then let thy strength appear in my weakness, and enable me to overcome all the enemies of my salvation."

"Let the promises of the gospel be comfortable then to my distressed soul. As that, John iii. 16, 17. 1 Tim. i. 15. *Lord, preserve my soul,* for I desire to be *holy,* Ps. lxxxvi. 2—6. When the pains of death beset me, where then shall I seek for help, ease, and comfort, but with thee, my God? Then, good Lord, be thou with me, support and comfort me, smile upon me, for thy benignity is better than life."

"Christ is the only physician that can give ease

a poor dying sinner. Remember me then, O Lord, th the favour thou bearest to thy chosen, visit me th thy salvation. Upon my sick-bed I desire to nember thy word, (Prov. iii. 11, 12.) *Despise not chastening of the Lord, neither faint.* O let me ve such a perfect subjection to the Father of spi- s, that this chastisement may be for my profit, that may be a partaker of thy holiness. O thou Cap- in of my salvation, who wast made perfect through ffering, sanctify to me all my pains and terrors, ake me to bear them cheerfully and thankfully: asten me as thou pleasest here, so that I may not condemned in the world to come."

"Our afflictions, though sometimes severe and inful, are but for a moment; and they are nothing comparison with the torments of hell, which are ernal and intolerable. Our God is gracious, and *ill not always chide.*"

"If in health I have made preparation for death, hen it comes I have not a new work to begin, but old work to renew."

"Stay thyself, O my soul, upon the rock Christ esus, who is a merciful and faithful Priest, a sweet hepherd, his rod and staff shall comfort thee. In ie agonies of death cast thyself into the arms of thy lessed Saviour. If Satan assault thee, by setting efore thee the greatness and multitude of thy sins, emember that sweet place, (Mic. vii. 18.) *Who is a od like unto thee, pardoning iniquity?* And that, (Isa. 18.) *Though your sins have been as scarlet, they shall e as white as snow.*"

Out of Dr. Andrew Rivet's last hours; "Lord, et not this trial exceed my strength: O how light this chastisement if compared with my fault! and his temporal pain, if compared with eternal tor- ients, from which I am redeemed by him that poured ut his soul unto death for me! Lord, let not thy ood Spirit depart from me, that in this conflict I ay be more than a conqueror. Lord, let nothing eparate me from thee, or cause me to doubt of thy ove and favour."

"Lord, make my pains tolerable, or furnish me vith fortitude to bear them, that I may not offend vith my tongue. Crucify, O Lord, the old man, hat the body of sin may be destroyed, and I may ise again to a new life."

"Help me to wait with patience till my change comes; continue thy wonted mercy to thy poor ser- vant. Make thou my bed in my distress and misery, hat I faint not under thy hand."

"I have cast the care of me, of mine, of all my affairs, upon God; let him do with my body as pleaseth him, so it be well with my soul. I lament not my leaving the world; I have lived long enough in it, have made trial of it, and find it is all vanity and vexation of spirit."

"To whom shall I go for help, O Lord? In whom is my hope? Truly in thee. I desire *to depart* and *to be with Christ.* It is enough, Lord, receive now my soul. When I leave my body to the earth, I commit my spirit into the hands of God who gave it. I know this tabernacle cannot be dissolved without pain, the flesh must suffer and fall; but it matters not, provided the soul obtain new strength, and I arrive at a better place. Lord, strengthen me, and help my infirmities; be not far from me in the day of my sorrow; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. Have pity on me, O God, and deal graciously with me; let death be my passage to life eternal. I hope the combat will not continue long. Bring to pass, O Lord, that the end may crown the work. Receive my soul to thyself, O Lord; I yield it into thy hands, thou hast redeemed it, O God of truth. The Lord shall perfect that which concerns his glory, and my eternal salvation."

"I desire and hope, that I shall submit to God's good will and pleasure, and not wish to live any longer. When God calls, and my appointed time is come, then will I call on the Lord and say, *I have waited for thy salvation*, leave me not. When my heart fails, Lord, be thou my helper. *Deliver my soul from hell, my darling from the power of the lion.* Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee."

"Lord, loose these bands; how long, Lord Jesus, how long! Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me, and receive my soul! O happy day, when shall I depart out of this sinful world, and go to heaven! Lord, I feel my strength failing me in this earthly tabernacle; I am ready to depart, breath fails, and death appears ready to strike the last stroke; but I know I shall rise again to behold thy glory."

"It is my thoughts, that these poor meditations may be useful and comfortable to me, when I lie upon my sick and dying bed; then I hope the Lord will in mercy remember me, and take pity on me, and accept of me and my poor services, through Christ my Saviour. Lord, if it please thee, grant me that favour, that when I lie dying I may have the use of my reason."

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## HIS DEATH.

In these his meditations of death, and preparations for it, there appears something extraordinary; and one cannot but wish now to know what was the end, the exit, of such a conversation, and how he finished his course at last. Of which, take this short account.

On Friday, June 10, 1709, he rode to Cheerbrook, where he had lived about thirty years, walked with his son in the gardens and orchards; there he was taken with the gripes, a distemper he had been afflicted with some time before, but he rode near two miles after, designed to have given his old minister

at Wibunbury a visit, but his pain increasing, he hastened home, and had a bad night. In the morning, when his son came to him, he said, "I am very bad, but I am willing to die, having lived above the age of man." He expressed his hopes of salvation through Christ. He said his house was in order, and he hoped his soul also. He would by no means have any physician sent for, but said, it was time for him to leave the world, and it did not become him at that age to use a physician. About noon on Saturday, he was persuaded to take some drops to ease his violent pain, and had for a few hours great ease; but at night his pain returned again. On the morning of the Lord's day, he spoke to his wife and son about his burial, which he would have to be private, and ordered matters, as if he had known that that must be his dying day, as it proved, though they about him thought he might recover, or at least have continued many days, being of a strong body, and considering his age, of a healthy constitution, and because he bore his pains with such patience, without groan or complaint. But when he was asked how he did, he said, "Worse and worse, I cannot live long in these pains."

At noon, being the Lord's day, he desired to be prayed for publicly; and called to his son, to read to him the foregoing meditations of death, which he did at several times; and he said, they refreshed and comforted him; and it was for such a time as this that he had drawn them up. They were also very affecting to those about him. He also repeated divers of them himself.

He said to his son, "I would not, for all the world, that I had my work of preparation for death to do now." About two o'clock, he called to his son to pray by him; which he did; and at the close of his prayer, added some of the petitions which the good man had prepared in his book for such a time. He then bid him go to the public worship; which he did, not thinking his father's end had been so near as it proved. In about an hour and a half, he returned, and found a great change. His voice was gone, and it appeared he was dying; but he did not groan, or make any complaint. His son kneeled down to speak some comfortable words to him in his dying conflict; to which he answered, "I shall be well presently," and scarce spoke a word more. The minister of the parish came in, and prayed with him, and commended his soul into the hand of the Almighty. He had just before put out his hand to a friend that came in to see him, by which it appeared he was sensible; but quickly after, while the minister was with him, about six of the clock, he breathed his last, June 12, 1709.

On Tuesday following, his corpse was carried on a mourning carriage to Wibunbury, attended by a great number of people. The captain of his company, who was major of the train-bands of the county, attended the funeral with his company, put the drum in mourning, marched with their arms, and gave him several volleys over his grave.

Mr. Bromfield preached his funeral sermon on the text which he himself chose, Ps. ciii. 13, 14. *Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear him; for he knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust.* The reason he gives for choosing that text was, because he had chosen that excellent psalm (as he calls it) for the subject of his morning meditations for a great while; and usually repeated it all to himself as soon as he awaked, before he rose: and these words particularly he thought very comfortable to a doubting, drooping soul. He had himself drawn up meditations upon those words, to the length of a sermon.

The minister, in the close of his discourse, spoke of him thus: "A good name has this our deceased brother left behind him; and a good character do all those deserve that are so diligent in the discharge of their duty, both to God and man, as he was. He gave proof of his love to God, by his constant resort to his house and ordinances, his affection to the prayers of the church, and devout joining in them, his attentive hearing the word read and preached, and his frequent and devout communicating; and he kept a constant course of religious exercise in his family; a thing too much neglected among us. I doubt not, but his worshipping of God in secret was daily and devout, agreeable to his care of family worship. He took great care that the Lord's day was kept holy, both by himself, and by his family; and further evidenced his love to God by his bold and ready appearing against profaneness and immorality."

He was a very useful man in his neighbourhood, being ready to do good to all, both rich and poor, according to his ability and opportunity. He was very happy in the love of his neighbours, was active and successful in the blessed work of peace-making among them; was just in his dealings, a faithful friend, a careful father, and a very affectionate husband; in a word, his conversation showed him to be a true lover of virtue and goodness, and a very serious Christian.

Upon his death-bed he was patient, and wholly resigned to the will of God, in a humble hope of his mercy in Christ; and at his departure, had the prayers of his minister, by whom his soul was commended into the hands of the Almighty, and into the state of blessed souls. I question not but that our deceased brother is received; for, *like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knows our frame, and remembers we are but dust.*

He was generally lamented at his death, as he had been universally beloved and respected by all that knew him while he lived. The members of par-

ament for the county, and other gentlemen of the rst rank would visit him at his house. When the oubles were in Ireland, Col. Cook's family lodged t his house for some time, and always after exressed a great kindness for him; and he retained mighty respect for that worthy Colonel, and his mily, and friends. He made some verses to be dded to the inscription on his grave-stone, if his on thought fit; but this, says he, or any other, or one at all, I leave to your discretion.

Lieutenant Richard Illidge died June 12, 1709, ged seventy-two. In his life-time he had served our sovereigns, three kings, and one queen, as a ub-officer in the militia of this county, for the space f near fifty years.

Now slain by death who spareth none,
And lies full low under this stone:
Take heed, and read, and thou shalt see,
As I am now so shalt thou be.
Rotting in dark and silent dust;
Prepare for death, for die thou must.
Life is uncertain, death is sure;
Sin is the wound, Christ is the cure.

MEMENTO MORI.

He was of a middle stature, strong and well set; of a healthy constitution, comely visage, inclining to feed, which made him spare in his diet, eating little but at dinner.

When his friends told him, that if he should leave off worldly business, and retire into privacy, he would find it a melancholy sort of life; he answered: "I thank God, my time never lies upon my hand, I can cultivate the little garden of my soul, when I have no other business, and I have good books for my companions.——I may with shame and sorrow (says he) look back upon an ill-spent life; my childhood and youth were folly and vanity; my riper years were mostly spent in carking and caring, and seeking after the profits and pleasures of this world; and I have too much neglected the main business, my duty to God: Lord, I repent; Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief; free me from every weight, and the sin that doth most easily beset me."

# A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

## OPENING OF THE NEW MEETING-HOUSE AT CHESTER,

AUGUST 8, 1700.

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JOSHUA xxii. 22, 23.

*The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know, if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord,——that we have built us an altar.*

THUS the two tribes and a half begin their solemn reply to the remonstrance of the other tribes, who, with sword in hand, ready to make good their challenge, boldly charged them with a crime no less black and dangerous, than apostasy from the truth and worship of the God of Israel. Thus the indictment runs, *v.* 16. that they had rebelled against the Lord, and turned from following him, *v.* 18. and these were indeed heinous crimes, and, in the sense of the patriarchal age, *an iniquity to be punished by the judges*, Job xxxi. 28. thus to have denied the God that is above, if they had been really guilty of it.

But never was there any controversy more innocently begun, more prudently and discreetly managed, nor more happily compromised, and taken up, than this was; for whereas in most quarrels there is a fault on both sides, in this there does not appear to be a fault on either side; and whereas the *beginning of strife is as the letting forth of water*, the occasion of much mischief, the beginning of this was an occasion for both sides to give evidences of their zeal for religion and love.

Let us look into the particulars of the story:

1. That which gave rise to the controversy was an altar erected by the two tribes over against the land of Canaan in the borders of Jordan, *a great altar to see to*, *v.* 10. and this done without any leave asked, or warrant obtained, from Joshua or Eleazar; without any notice given to, or consultation had with, their brethren of the other tribes; yet being done with an honest design to preserve the entail of religion to their posterity, and to be a token of their communion with the altar of the Lord at Shiloh, was not only warrantable, but commendable. This they solemnly declare to be the true intent and meaning of their building this altar; that they had no idolatrous, superstitious, or schismatical design in it, but that they intended it for a witness *(in perpetuam rei memoriam—in perpetual attestation)* of their alliance to their brethren, from whom they were divided by the waters of Jordan. They did not set it up as a mere stone or rock of division, much less *as a stone of stumbling or a rock of offence*, but as a badge of relation, and consequently a *nexus* or bond of union, wisely foreseeing and providing against so great a mischief, as the alienating of their posterity from the church privileges of the seed of Israel; for fear, say they, lest in time to come *your children might speak to our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? v.* 24. the consequences of which, in after and more degenerate ages, might be most fatal.

They who have themselves found how good it is to be near to God, and what an unspeakable pleasure and happiness there is in communion with him, cannot but be concerned to take all possible care, and make all probable provision, that their children after them may not be made to cease from following the Lord, or be looked on as having no part in him. With the human nature, which we transmit to posterity depraved and corrupted, it is very desirable to transmit pure and entire those sovereign remedies which religion has provided for the cure of that hereditary disease: not the narrow and private interests of a party, which in kindness to posterity we should study how to bury in oblivion, but the great and noble principles of catholic Christianity; these we should desire to entail the knowledge and faith of upon our *seed's seed, henceforth and for ever*, Isa. lix. 21. They who rejoice in the light of the gospel, will desire that it may not die in their hands; and they who find themselves enriched with

e true treasure, and know how to value it, cannot t wish it may not be buried in their graves, Ps. xxii. . cii. 28. but well secured to their heirs, that in their be, and the families thereof, the name of Christ ay *endure for ever, and his throne as the days of old.*

2. The godly jealousy of the other tribes, who susected their altar to be of dangerous tendency, and be an ill step towards idolatry or schism, was ewise praise-worthy; and their warm resentments, ien they had such a colour of cause for them, were laudable instance of their pious zeal for the hour of the Lord God of Israel. The thing *prima rie* looked bad, and gave ground for suspicion. ie law of Moses had expressly required them to fer all their sacrifices in the place which the Lord ould choose to put his name there, and not elsehere, under the severe penalty of excision, Lev. rii. 8, 9. Deut. xii. 5, 6. and it was no strained uendo, or foreign surmise, from the building of an tar in the borders of Jordan, to infer an intention offer sacrifice there contrary to the law of God. his they take very heinously, and seem to be uched by it in a very tender part; they reckon the onfronting of God's altar an intolerable affront to ie government, *et altaria contra altaria* no less angerous than *imperium in imperio,* and to be aniadverted on accordingly.

The God we serve is very jealous in the matters of is worship, (which are to him as the apple of his ye,) and he expects we should be so to, and afraid f all appearances of evil; yea, and dreading the rst step towards apostasy from God, and so cordilly espousing his institutions, and the honour and urity of them, as to be jealous of any thing that oks like an encroachment upon them: when the ause is plainly God's, our call to appear in it is lear, and when the thing we do is good, nothing etter than to be zealously affected in it, Gal. iv. 8. When our Lord Jesus had commended the angel f the church of Ephesus, particularly for her paience, he adds this further character, (which though t seems contrary to it, yet is very consistent with it,) hat she could not bear them that were evil, Rev. ii. 2. It is no part of Christian patience to bear with in; the meekest man upon earth was more than nce angry at sin. The nearer any are to us in reation and neighbourhood, the more jealous we should e of their departure from God, and the more industrious to prevent and reduce them, lest we ourselves r ours should catch the infection. *Jam——tua res gitur paries cum proximus ardet—Thy own goods are ndangered when the adjoining house is on fire.*

3. The method they took in prosecution of their resentments was regular and exemplary; their zeal in this matter was for the most part guided and governed by the meekness of wisdom. An assembly of the states was called at Shiloh, and the report concerning this altar was taken into consideration, the result of which was, that the business should be fairly and impartially examined, and the supposed delinquents heard to speak for themselves; who if they would hear and submit to their reproof, well and good, *they had gained their brethren,* Matt. xviii. 15, 17. but if they refused, then, and not till then, it was time to deal with them as heathen men, and devoted Canaanites. These tribes of Israel, though apt to war, yet would not send forth their armies to give them battle, till they had first sent their ambassadors, (and those men of the first rank,) to treat of peace, and to inquire into the merits of the cause, *v.* 13, 14. He to whom all things are naked and bare, would not punish the most notorious criminals, the cry of whose wickedness alarmed heaven itself, but he would first go down and see, Gen. xviii. 21. It is the advice of the wise man, and it will be our wisdom in all such cases to take the advice, Prov. xxv. 8, 9. *Go not forth hastily to strive, but debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself.* Many an unhappy strife, and all the mischievous consequences of it, would be prevented by an amicable and candid inquiry into the matter of the offence. The reason why we do not love one another as we ought, is because we do not, and will not, know one another as we might: the rectifying of mistakes and misunderstandings, and the setting of misconstrued words and actions in a true light, that they may appear as they are meant, and not otherwise, would be in many cases an effectual way to accommodate both private and public quarrels, and bring them to a happy period.

4. The defence which the two tribes made for themselves, to clear and vindicate what they had done, was very ingenuous and fair. Though there was somewhat more of warmth in the charge exhibited against them than was needful, and the fault was too much taken for granted; yet they patiently heard them out, and then replied with a great deal of calmness, very fairly stating the case, and showing the suspiciousness of their brethren to be (though not without a colourable pretence, yet) without a just ground, not doubting but they would lay aside their jealousies, and let fall their action, when they understood their honest and sincere intention and design in building this altar.

Lastly, The effect of this was very good and happy; the princes were satisfied, and receded from their charge, and thereby showed themselves to be under the government of that great law of charity, which teaches us not *to rejoice in iniquity, but to rejoice in the truth;* hereby further mischief was prevented, the peace and honour of their infant state preserved, and God had the glory of all, *v.* 33.

The text begins that defence which had so good and happy a success. It may be of use to us to observe how it was managed, that we may learn in the like cases so to vindicate ourselves, as not to pro-

voke, but pacify, our brethren. Here is not a word of recrimination, no return of suspicion for suspicion; (though nothing is more easy to retort than that;) they do not blame their brethren for their rash, and hasty, and uncharitable censures, nor upbraid them with the good services they had done them in helping to put them in possession of their land, nor defy their threatened arms, and bid them do their worst; here is nothing that savours of pride or passion, but all fair and candid: though the periods of their speech are elaborate enough, and the style proper, yet nothing appears to be so much studied in it, *as the things that make for peace.*— Observe,

I. The manner and form in which the plea is drawn up: it runs both as an appeal to God, and an apology to their brethren.

1. Here is a solemn appeal made to God concerning that which they had done, repeated to make it the more solemn, *The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knows.* That glorious title of God, which speaks him higher than the highest of the angels in heaven, the princes and potentates of the earth, and the imaginary deities of the heathen, (for each of these are called gods,) is here made use of, to express a holy awe and dread of that God to whom they appeal, upon their own spirits, and to beget the like in the minds of those with whom they speak. The sense had been complete if they had only said, God knows; but then they had not taken the occasion given them, to express their high and honourable thoughts of the great Jehovah. Let us learn hence to speak of God with reverence, and mention his glorious name with a solemn pause. Is it a piece of respect due to earthly princes in addresses made to them, to give them their title of honour; and shall we speak as slightly and carelessly of the King of kings, as if he were not only a man like ourselves, but a common man in our own rank? Is this to fear that glorious and fearful name, the Lord our God?

In appeals to heaven, it is especially necessary that there be a very awful decorum and solemnity observed, for God is appealed to, not as a common witness, but as a judge, whose tribunal is in the heavens, and by whose definitive sentence all causes must be finally and irreversibly determined; those therefore that appeal to him upon every trivial occasion, and with a slightly superficial God knows, while they never think of God, nor have any regard to his knowledge, profane his name by taking it in vain, and instead of honouring him, put the greatest affront that can be upon him. Appeals thus put into the court above, will not only be rejected and thrown out (how just soever the matter may be) as not being put in due form, but the appellant prosecuted for a contempt of the court.

's appeal here is a good pattern or precedent in drawing up appeals. *The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knows:* he that is the God of gods, even Jehovah, (so it is placed in the original,) is both a rightful and competent judge of all appeals made to him: who should judge and pass sentence but he that is Jehovah, the mighty God, even the Lord? for so this same title which is here used is translated, Ps. l. 1. where God is spoken of at large as the sovereign and universal Judge. If he be Jehovah, he is perfect in knowledge, wisdom, and justice, and we are sure that his judgment is according to truth; that it is such as the guilty have reason to dread, and the upright reason to rejoice in. If he be the God of gods, the mighty God, his jurisdiction cannot be demurred unto, nor his authority disputed, no further appeals can be made to any higher court, nor can the executions taken out upon his judgment be opposed or resisted; the God of gods is a Judge that will not be baffled.

To the tribunal of the mighty God the two tribes here refer the decision of this matter in variance. If we have done this in rebellion, and with an ill design, the Lord God of gods he knows it, (for he *is* acquainted with all the transgressions that are committed against him, even those that are gilded over with the most plausible pretences,) and he that looks upon it will require it, will revenge it; but we are sure he knows the contrary, and that however it be interpreted, it is honestly intended. From whence we may observe,

(1.) That in every thing we do in religion it concerns us highly to approve ourselves to God in our integrity, so as to be able with a holy, humble, well grounded confidence to appeal to him concerning it: herein we must labour, and this must be the top of our ambition, in every service that we may be accepted of the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 9. doing it as unto the Lord, and not to men, and then it is done heartily, Col. iii. 23. It was the total miscarriage of the Pharisees in their devotions, and the dead fly that tainted all their precious ointment, that all their works they did to be seen of men, their approbation and applause they coveted, to them they were industrious to approve themselves, and *verily they had their reward,* Matt. xxiii. 5. vi. 2, 5. In this therefore our righteousness must exceed theirs, or we shall never get to heaven, Matt. v. 20. All our works we must do to be seen of God, setting ourselves in the doing of them before him, having our eye towards him in every performance, diligently observing his will as our rule, and his glory as our end, and earnestly desiring and courting his favour and acceptance, as our felicity, recompence, and chief good; accounting that if he be well pleased with us, and say, Well done, we have gained our point, we have all we need, all we would have; if we have praise of God, whether we have praise of men or no, we are happy, and ought to be easy. Let us therefore see to it, that

ll our exercises of piety and devotion, public and
'ate, our hearts be upright with God, that we be
ly as good as we seem to be, because God knows
ther we be so or no, and will accept us no further
1 we are so; that our eye be single, our inten-
s sincere, and all we do be done from an unbi-
:d principle of regard to God as our ruler and
tion, as that which consecrates our services to
Lord, and recommends them, through the medi-
n of Christ, to his acceptance.

?.) That when at any time we fall under the cen-
:s of men, and their reproaches, who condemn us
ause they do not know us, it is very comfortable
)e able to appeal to a God that knows us, con-
ning our integrity. When holy Job was run
rn by his friends as a hypocrite, this was his
ıfort, Job xvi. 19, 20. *My witness is in heaven,*
*my record is on high: my friends scorn me; but*
*ie eye poureth out tears unto God.* David oft found
ef by taking the same course, and appeals from
unjust and uncharitable accusations of his ene-
:s to God's knowledge of his integrity, and is so
from dreading and deprecating God's judgment,
every wicked man if he knows himself must,) that
begs it, and refers himself to it: (Ps. xvii. 2.)
*t my sentence come forth from thy presence; let*
*ne eyes behold the things that are equal.* Ps. xxvi.
If God say, Well done, good and faithful servant,
: matter is not great who says otherwise; for so
ıll our doom be, as God hath decided it, and not
men give their opinion of it. If therefore he that
lgeth us is the Lord, surely it is a very small thing,
d not worthy our consideration, or fit to affect us
ıch, especially so as to turn the scale of our re-
lves, how we are judged of man's judgment, 1 Cor.
3, 4. If men brand our devotion as counterfeit
d hypocritical, and put us under the blackest cha-
cters, let it not disquiet nor disturb us, while we
ve good hopes, through grace, that God accepts us
d our services, as sincere; let not them therefore
at know righteousness, (that know what will bear
em out, and bring them off,) and in whose heart is
e law of God, (and not in their mouths only,) let
em not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of
eir revilings, so as thereby to be either diverted
)m, or discouraged in, their duty; *for the righte-*
*ıness that will justify them shall be for ever, and the*
*lvation following it, from generation to generation,*
a. li. 7, 8. This will be our rejoicing in the day
evil, even the testimony of our conscience, which
God's deputy in the soul, 2 Cor. i. 12. Let, there-
)re, the generation of the upright, when most misre-
resented, commit their cause to God. He who
nows their righteousness will sooner or later bring
: forth as the morning, and if their integrity be ma-
ıifest to God, (as undoubtedly it is,) it shall in due
ime also be *manifested in the consciences of men,* 2
Cor. v. 11.

2. Here is a sober apology presented to their brethren: *Israel he shall know.* We are ready to let Israel know; ready to give such an account of our meaning in this attempt, as we doubt not will give our brethren other thoughts of us, and it, than they now have: which teaches us this, that though the record on high, and the witness in our own bosoms, are principally to be secured for us, yet there is a satisfaction which we owe to our brethren, who doubt concerning the integrity of our actions.

Though our brethren are not our judges, by whose sentence our state is to be determined, yet they are our friends, in whose opinions we should desire to stand right. Though to be accepted of God is without doubt the chief and most desirable good, yet it is also desirable and well worthy our endeavour, like Mordecai, Esth. x. 3. *to be accepted of the multitude of our brethren.* If our sincerity be known to God, we should study how to let others know it, and to give evidences of it to those that have their eyes upon us. It is part of the debt we owe to ourselves, to preserve our own good name, and part of the debt we owe to our brethren, to value and seek their good will, and as far as we can to rectify their mistakes and prejudices.

We should especially study how to give satisfaction to those, who though they misunderstand our words and actions, and judge of us accordingly, yet show a zeal for the glory of God, as these ten tribes here did. The reproaches of the fools in Israel are to be despised; it is no matter what they speak against us who profanely speak against God, nor should it much affect us if we be made the song of the drunkards, but the deliberate censures of wise and sober men cannot be made so light of. It is a desirable thing to be accepted of those, who we have reason to think are accepted of God; therefore David prays, Ps. cxix. 79. *Let those that fear thee turn in unto me.* Though we ought not to be ambitious of the applause of any, yet we should wish and endeavour not to lie under the hard thoughts of good men; and for this reason, we should be always ready to give an answer to those that ask us *a reason of the hope that is in us,* 1 Pet. iii. 15. and not say, What is that to you? Though that which satisfies our own consciences may not always be satisfactory to others, nor convince them that we are in the right; yet if it be produced with meekness and fear, as it ought to be, it may perhaps beget a more favourable opinion, and somewhat abate the edge of censure, when it appears that we are not altogether without excuse. Perhaps after the two tribes had so fully vindicated themselves, and what they had done in building this altar, their brethren of the ten tribes, or some of them at least, were not fully convinced of the expediency of it, but were still of the mind that they had better have let it alone, and that it was altogether needless; but, however, it had this good effect, that

it made the matter abundantly better than at first it seemed, and prevented the unhappy rupture that it threatened; and the ten tribes, though no great admirers of the contrivance of this altar, yet agreed to be neighbourly and friendly with their brethren, and resolved they would not quarrel about it, nor go up in battle against them.—Observe,

II. The matter insisted on in their plea: they plead Not guilty to the charge, and though the fact was plain enough, yet they deny the fault, and aver that it was not in rebellion, nor in transgression against the Lord, that they had built them an altar; they humbly desired, that it might not be misconstrued as done with any design to infringe the honour, or weaken the true interest, of the national establishment, (which they express a very tender concern for,) but only to preserve and promote the common interests of true religion and godliness among themselves on the other side Jordan, in communion with their brethren, and not in any affront or contradiction to them, and therefore not in rebellion or in transgression against the Lord. Learn from this, that it highly concerns those who build an altar, for themselves to see to it, that they do it not in rebellion or in transgression against the Lord. Building of altars was an ancient act of piety and devotion; Noah and Abraham were famous for it; but that, as other outward instances of religion, if not done from a right principle, and for a right end, may and will turn into sin. We read of Ephraim making many altars to sin, Hos. viii. 11. The multiplying of his altars was the multiplying of his transgressions, and the righteous God turned it into his punishment, *therefore altars shall be unto him to sin*, that is, they shall be a continual snare to him; and the connexion of the parts of the charge against Israel, Hos. viii. 14. is very surprising; *Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples.* Those who build altars on which to offer in the Eucharist a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of quick and dead, (as the church of Rome does,) do in effect deny the sufficiency of that one great sacrifice, which Christ offered once for all upon the cross; and by the pretended repetitions of it, insinuate that it is of no more force to take away sin than the legal sacrifices which were heretofore offered year by year continually; because these could not make the comers thereunto perfect, and therefore those altars are certainly built in rebellion and transgression against the Lord, Heb. x. 1. Those that build altars for the maintaining and propagating any heresy, or the promoting and carrying on any design against religion in the power of it, that build altars to support a monopoly of the church, and engross to themselves its privileges, to the exclusion of others, spoil the acceptableness of the altars they build; and it will be construed to be done in transgression against the Lord. If we bestow all our goods in building temples and altars, and have not charity, the reigning love of God and our neighbour in our hearts, all the cost is thrown away, and spent in vain, and we are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. and shall be dealt with as rebels against the Lord. Let it therefore be our care, to do not only that which is good for the matter of it, but to do it well, for *then, and then only, we shall be accepted*, Gen. iv. 7.

You see, my brethren, how the further opening of this would lead me to the vindication of what we have done here, in furnishing ourselves with these conveniences for our solemn assemblies; but it was not for that purpose that I chose this text, nor shall I enter upon that subject; partly because, I bless God, I know not of any that exhibit so high a charge against us, as that we have done it in rebellion or in transgression against the Lord, and I am very willing to hope the best concerning our brethren's thoughts of us; and partly because I am resolved industriously to decline every thing that looks like controversy, and I should fear lest our defence be construed our offence, or at least be interpreted an invitation or persuasion of people to our way, and an attempt to make proselytes to a party, which you know I have always been studious to avoid. It is a string that can scarce be touched so tenderly but it will have a jarring sound, than which nothing is more disagreeable to me. I am sure this is not a time of day for us to pick quarrels, while through the clemency of our governors we enjoy great quietness; and we have as little reason to do it in this place as any where: while the prime dignitaries of the established church among us seem to have buried the thoughts of our unhappy differences in such a hearty, pious zeal for the reformation of manners, we are very unjust and unwise if we say or do any thing to revive them. Are these thoughts laid to sleep? may they on both sides sleep perpetually! But that which I further intend in the application of what I have opened to the present occasion, is from this text and story to borrow some light,

1. For the stating of our case as it truly stands, and giving a just account of what we have here done.

2. For the directing us in the duty of this present day, which I principally aim at.

For the first; our building us an altar, besides that which stands upon the foot of the national establishment, *(altare juxta altare,)* is a thing which needs explication, for the preventing and rectifying the mistakes of some unthinking people, who are apt to look upon those who go to church, and those who go to meetings, as of two different religions, and the distance between them is widened to a degree equal to that between papists and protestants; thanks be to God the matter is not so: let us therefore see how it stands between us and our brethren of the ten tribes.

1. We also are Israelites in common, and there-

fore in communion with those of the national establishment. Are they Christians? so are we; we worship the same God, in the same name, and heartily consent with them in all the articles of the ancient creed, holding just the same form of sound words, and contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. We are baptized, and do baptize, in the same great and sacred name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as three Persons, but one God. We read the same Scriptures, and adhere to them as the standing rule of faith and practice, and make use of them as our oracle and touchstone. We pretend to no inspiration in our praying and preaching, nor do we set up any light within, in competition with, much less in contradiction to, the written word. We build our hopes of salvation upon the covenant of grace, and the promises of it made to us and to our children, and submit to all gospel-ordinances, particularly that of the ministry. Whatever the way in which we worship the God of our fathers is called and counted, we believe all things which are written in the law and the prophets, and the everlasting gospel, and have hope towards God, which they also allow, *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust*, Acts xxiv. 14, 15.

We are far from engrossing religion and the church to ourselves, and those of our own way, or thinking that we are the only elect people of God; from our hearts we abhor and renounce all such narrow principles as are contrary to catholic Christianity, and undermine and straiten its sure and large foundations. We do hereby solemnly profess, and shall take all occasions to repeat it, that we celebrate our religious assemblies *in communion with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*, 1 Cor. i. 2. We neither say nor do any thing here to the reproach or prejudice of the national establishment; we take not upon us to arraign or censure the constitutions of it, or to judge or despise those that adhere to them; but in those few and small things wherein our apprehensions differ, (whilst in the most and greatest things of all we cordially agree,) we desire faithfully and conscientiously to walk according to the light that God has given us, charitably believing that others do so too, whom we hope to meet in the general assembly of the first-born, though now we are divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel. This profession we make in the sincerity of our hearts, with a resolution, by the grace of God, never to act contrary to it.

And now may we not claim it as our right to be owned and looked upon as members of the catholic church, though a weak and small part of it, yet a part of it, and I trust not a corrupt part; and being united with our brethren of the other tribes, under one civil government, and being (abundantly to our satisfaction) within the same allegiance, and even in our religious interests taken into the same protection, we see not why we should not be looked upon as belonging to that part of the catholic church which God's own right hand hath planted in these kingdoms.

2. Though we also are Israelites, yet our lot, like that of the two tribes, happens to fall on the other side Jordan, a river dividing between us and our brethren, which, without hazarding the peace of our consciences, we cannot wade through or swim over.

Some of the tribes of our English Israel have been so situated ever since the reformation, as early as Edward the Sixth's time, through a dissatisfaction about the injunction of some indifferent things, the more minute parts of the national establishment. The first settlement of the two tribes on the other side Jordan was looked upon by Moses and the rest of the tribes with a jealousy, as tending to weaken the common interests of Israel; and their proposing of it (as here their building of an altar) was severely censured, till they had given their reasons, cleared themselves of any ill design in it, and promised their best assistance to their brethren in the common service; and then Moses allowed and ratified their choice, as we have the story at large, Numb. xxxii. where we find, that two things induced them to desire their lot on that side Jordan, though thereby they put themselves out of the way of the preferments which attended Joshua and the ark into the land of Canaan, and exposed themselves to the contempt and censure of their brethren, as strangers to the commonwealth of Israel.

(1.) That there was good pasture in the land, *v.* 4. *It is a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle:* they would sit down by the *footsteps of the flock, and feed their kids beside the shepherds' tents.*

(2.) That then they should not have the trouble of passing the river, *v.* 5. *Bring us not over Jordan.* Whether these inducements were justifiable we will not now dispute, but it appears that the rest of the tribes, who could satisfy themselves to go through Jordan, did not therefore disown them for their brethren.

From the first planting of Christianity, there appears to have been a variety of sentiments among wise and good men, concerning the less weighty and less evident matters of the gospel, as concerning the distinction of meats and the observation of days, Rom. xiv. 2, 5. some regarding all days and all meats alike, others making a religious difference. The apostle Paul, by his unquestionable authority, might have determined the matter in favour of one side, and have obliged the other to a compliance; but he chooses to accommodate the matter, without engaging either to change their opinions or their practice according to them, but prescribes a mutual

charity and forbearance, as a sovereign remedy against all the ill consequences of this variety of sentiments, Phil. iii. 15, 16. *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not*, Rom. xiv. 3. *But let every man be persuaded in his own mind*, v. 5. Which no doubt were intended to be standing rules for the management of the like differences in all the ages of the church; and if these rules were strictly observed by all churches and all Christians, the river of Jordan would be dried up, at least be *driven back at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob*, Ps. civ. 5, 7. the God of peace and love: and a way would be made for those *of the ransomed of the Lord to pass over*, whose lot is on the other side of it; but alas, who shall live when God does this!

In the mean time, for the divisions of Reuben, (one of the two tribes that was divided from the rest by the waters of Jordan,) there cannot but be great thoughts and searchings of heart, as Judg. v. 15, 16. with all that desire and pray *for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem*.

3. Being Israelites, (though on the other side Jordan,) it ought to be our care and endeavour, according as our lot is, to promote the common interests of our holy religion, and to do what we can to preserve and advance them. *And the Lord God of gods, he knows* it is with this design that we have built us an altar; not for the support of a sect or party, or the carrying on of any private interests, but for the service of catholic Christianity according to the Scriptures. We know very well *that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*, Rom. xiv. 17. that it is not maintained either by the imposition or opposition of indifferent things, but that it consists *in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*; these are the things in which lie the being and power of the divine life, and not in a zeal either for or against ceremonies: we know very well, that *neither circumcision is any thing, nor uncircumcision any thing*, to our acceptance with God, *but the new creature*, and *faith which works by love*, Gal. v. 6. vi. 15. That therefore which is of uncontroverted necessity, and which is the very life and soul of religion, we would do our endeavour, and make it our business, at this altar, to maintain and carry on, so that we *and our children after us may have a part in the Lord, and may never cease from following him*. We would endeavour to glorify the great name of God in Christ in our prayers and praises, and, in concurrence with the universal church, to pay due homage to the universal Lord. We desire and design in the preaching of the word, to propagate the knowledge of the *only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is life eternal*; to push on the holy war against sin and Satan, the world and the flesh, under the banner of the exalted Redeemer. Our intention in all our ministrations shall be the same with the intentions of the ministry in general, Acts xxvi. 18. *First to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God*: to recover people from under the dominion of a worldly, carnal, sensual mind, to the faith and obedience of the everlasting gospel; and then, *for the building up of the saints in holiness and comfort, and the edifying of the body of Christ, till they all come to the perfect man*, Eph. iv. 12, 13. And herein we are still *determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified*.

And this we do not in opposition to, but a hearty concurrence with, the national establishment, as far as it aims at these ends. *God forbid that we should preach Christ, who is our peace, out of envy or contention*; no, we desire to have all our different apprehensions and sentiments swallowed up in a pious *zeal for the common faith of the precious Jesus, and the common salvation* of precious souls; and in token of this communion with our brethren of the other tribes, we have built us this altar, that we may say as they, v. 28. *Behold the pattern of the altar which we have built!* not to entail a schism, and to perpetuate a causeless separation, but for the solemnity and decorum of our religious assemblies, (until God shall open a door into the national establishment, *and the rolling away of their reproach, that it may not be said to us, as it was to the Gileadites*, (the half tribe whose lot was on the other side Jordan,) *Ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim*, Judg. xii. 4.

We need not, we cannot, put it into our apology, that we have not built our altar for burnt-offerings and sacrifices; for, blessed be God, we are not under the gospel tied up to worship in one place, John iv. 21. as the Jews were under the law. *The hour now is, when, neither to this mountain, nor yet to Jerusalem shall religious worship be confined; but in every place incense shall be offered and prayers made*, Mal. i. 11. *every where*, without respect of places, 1 Tim. ii. 8. We know no temples, *no altar, that sanctifies the gift*, or the service, but Christ only, Heb. xiii. 20. But this we can say, that we have not built our altar in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord, or to make a breach upon catholic unity. Thus I have endeavoured, with the words of truth and soberness, to state our case; and I know I speak the sentiments of many.

What remains is, Secondly, to direct you in the duty of the present day and occasion. And now, my brethren, *What doth the Lord our God require of us?* I take it for granted you are willing to know, and therefore, I beseech you, suffer the word of exhortation.

1. Let us give God the glory of our peaceable settlement in the land of our possession. We have reason to acknowledge it to a kind providence, that cast our lot in such a land as this, an exceeding good land, like that of Canaan, *a pleasant land*,

Dan. viii. 9. a glorious land, or land of delights or ornaments, wherein there is no want of any good thing, nor any reason to envy (all things considered) either the soil or climate of any other land. The constitution of our civil government, and the defences and securities of our liberty and property, are such as make our nation easy, safe, and happy. Our lot is also cast in a good day, wherein we have not for many years felt the strokes of any desolating judgments, either war, famine, or pestilence. While thus we dwell peaceably under fruitful *vines and fig-trees*, we are much to blame if we praise not the name of the Lord.

The two tribes built this altar here to the glory of God, when they were returning triumphantly to settle in their inheritance, as David fetched the ark to the place he had prepared for it, when God *had given him rest from all his enemies round about*, 2 Sam. vii. 1. The Israelites, every time they offered their first-fruits, were appointed to make a thankful mention of the mercy of God to them, in giving them that good land, Deut. xxvi. 3, 9, 10. And we have a great deal of reason to do the same, now we are offering the first-fruits of our altar. If we consider how melancholy the reverse of our present circumstances would be, we should see what great cause we have to be thankful to God, for our share in the public peace and plenty. National plenty in the success of trade, and the increase of the earth, contributes to the support and comfort of our religious assemblies; for thus we have wherewithal to honour our God. When famine reigned, *the meat-offering and the drink-offering failed from the house of God*, Joel i. 13. compare *ch.* ii. 14. National peace does no less contribute to the comfort of our assemblies, *for in the peace of the nation we have peace.* We have great reason to bless God that our land is not the seat of war, *and that the sword of the Lord is not drawn among us*, (as sometimes it has been,) *and commissioned to lay heaps upon heaps: that the city, the place of our solemnities, is a quiet habitation*, Isa. xxxiii. 20. It is easy to imagine what desolations war, especially civil war, would make, not only with our cities and houses, but with our temples and altars. *(Inter arma silent leges et evangelium —in the din of arms neither the voice of human law nor of the gospel is heard.)* What a mercy is it that we are delivered from *the noise of archers*, and *all other the alarms of war, at the places of drawing waters! and therefore, there ought we to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord*, Judg. v. 11. We have reason to call the altar we have built, as Moses called his, Exod. xvii. 15. (in thankfulness after the discomfiture of Amalek,) *Jehovah Nissi—The Lord my banner*, in whom we triumph; and as Gideon called his in faith, before the defeat of Midian, *Jehovah Shallom—The Lord our peace*, in whom we trust.

2. Let us much more give God praise, for the national establishment of our religion, with that of our peace and civil liberty. That our Canaan is not only a land flowing with milk and honey, but (which is a much greater advantage) that *it is Immanuel's land*, Isa. viii. 8. that the Christian religion, that choice and noble vine, which was so early planted in our land, is still growing and flourishing in it, in despite of all the attempts of the powers of darkness to root it out; that it is refined from the errors and corruptions which the church of Rome had (with the help of ignorance and tyranny) introduced, and that the Reformation was in our land a national act: that Christianity thus purified, is supported and defended by good and wholesome laws, and is twisted in with the very constitution of our government. It is a maxim in our law books, that the law of God is the law of the land; that the Holy Scripture is of sovereign authority; and that if any statute be made directly against the law of God, it is void; and that every thing that is for the support of religion shall be favoured. *Summa ratio est quæ pro religione facit —that construction is to be preferred which supports religion*, and (which I would observe as a justification of the civil punishment of sabbath profanation) it is a constant rule of our law, *Dies Dominicus est dies non juridicus—Sunday is not a day in law*, that the law is so far from countenancing, that it nullifies and invalidates, all writs, processes, and judicial acts upon the Lord's day: and if the administration of right and justice consents to give way to the solemnity of the Lord's day, shall a common petty trade, or a vain idle sport, intrude or intrench upon these sacred hours, and not be animadverted upon?

The banks and bulwarks which the civil government hath raised, against the threatening force of atheism, deism, profaneness, and irreligion, on the one hand, and of popery and idolatry on the other hand, though they should not make us secure, and, as it were, in no danger from them; yet they should make us thankful, that God has not only set up his tabernacle among us, but hath set such a guard upon it, as we hope will preserve it to the generations to come, that the English nation may never be otherwise than a Christian protestant nation. The encouragement which the government gives to religion, is also a great support to it, and ought to be matter of rejoicing to all good men: that the civil powers speak comfortably *to them that teach the good knowledge of the Lord*, 2 Chron. xxx. 22. and take the ministry and the administration of ordinances under their protection and patronage. *God has not dealt so with other nations*, with other churches. True Christianity, we may safely say it, has not such a nursing father of any crowned head in the world, as it has in our land. The mercy is more sensibly great, because it is not long since our religion, and all the defences of it, with all its supports, were at

the brink of ruin; and, like Isaac upon the altar, lay ready to be sacrificed to the malice of our popish enemies; and had the ship then sunk, our cabin could not have been preserved. Deut. xxxii. 27. *But fearing the wrath of the enemy, lest they should behave themselves proudly;* Ezek. xxxvi. 32. *And not for our sakes be it known unto us,* God sent from heaven to save us, and raise up a deliverer for us, to whose seasonable and successful application we owe, under God, our present tranquillity. A mercy never to be forgotten, and to which every year's revolution makes a fresh addition; that notwithstanding our manifold provocations, by which we have forfeited our peace under the present government, and the restless and unwearied attempts of our enemies, who have been industrious to overturn it, we are yet in the enjoyment of its benign influences. This ought to be the matter of our wonder and praise. *Surely because the Lord loved us, he hath set a king over us,* and continued him so long, that answers Mordecai's character, Esth x. 3. *Seeking the welfare of his people, and speaking peace to all their seed.*

3. Let us acknowledge, with thankfulness to God, the favour which we on this side Jordan have found with the princes of our Israel; that they are so far satisfied that the altars we build are not in rebellion or in transgression against the Lord, that they do not go up to war against us, as these princes here resolved, *v.* 33. We have great reason to bless God for our present liberty, and that we have it confirmed to us by a law, and the wide door of opportunity continues open; God grant it may be effectual. Now, for a little space, (nay, for a long space, much longer than we would have flattered ourselves with the expectation of,) *grace has been showed us from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape those many dark and cloudy days* which passed over the heads of our predecessors, and some of ours; *and to give us a nail* (a fixing and settlement, and constant abode) *in his holy place:* that *our God may lighten our eyes, instruct and comfort us, and give us some reviving,* Ezra ix. 8. While we enjoy the comfort of our liberty, we ought to repeat our thanksgivings for the mercy of it; and an invaluable mercy it is, that *there is a defence upon our glory,* Isa. xlv. 6. and that our religious assemblies are taken under the kind protection and shelter of the government. Would we have this liberty continued? let us be thankful for it, and give diligence to make a good use of it while the gleam lasts. In the receiving of it *we were like them that dream,* Ps. cxxvi. 1. such was the surprise of it: let it not be said of us, that such is our slothfulness and carelessness, we are like them that dream, in the improvement of it; as the hungry man that dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty.

We have reason to be thankful, that the reproach of sedition, and disloyalty, and disaffection to the government, is quite done away from our assemblies, and that there is now no colour for the imputation of that, (which from our hearts we always abhorred,) the disturbance of the public peace; but that while *we live in godliness and honesty, we may live quiet and peaceable lives, and there is none to make us afraid.* If Ezra were so thankful to God for the countenance of a heathen king, and *that God had put such a thing into the king's heart,* Ezra vii. 27, 28. much more reason have we to be thankful for the countenance of a Christian and protestant government; *the good of which we are obliged to seek, because of the house of the Lord our God,* Ps. cxxii. It adds much to the comfort of our present liberty, that in the ratification of it by a law, it was not intended (as we have reason to fear it was on the first precarious grant of it) for a trap and a snare, and the serving of a design against our common interests; but for our ease, comfort, and benefit: and that in the preamble of the statute, it is declared to be for no less a public good, than the uniting of his majesty's protestant subjects in interest and affection. *This is the Lord's doing;* and as at first the surprise of it made it marvellous in our eyes, so the continuance of it makes it no less so. The altar we have built, we may call *our Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto the Lord has helped us.*

4. While we enjoy the liberty of our altars, let us remember and sympathize with our brethren, with whom *it is a day of treading down, and of perplexity:* I mean the poor persecuted protestants in France, who *are killed all the day long, and accounted as sheep for the slaughter, and whose blood is barbarously mingled with their sacrifices. They are our bone and our flesh, fellow-members of the same body,* concurring with us in the same testimony against the antichristian generation; but how is a *flourishing church made a wilderness, the gold become dim, the most fine gold changed.* While we meet together in full assemblies, they are scattered. We have decent and convenient places to meet in; but they are driven into woods and wildernesses, and *are counted as the offscouring of all things.* We are safe in our assemblies, and there is none to make us afraid; but they are exposed to the cruelty of bloody men, and cannot come together to worship God according to their consciences, but in peril of death, or a slavery much worse, and more terrible. When we consider this, and the sad desolations of the sanctuary in other places, our joy in the altar we have built admits as great a mixture and allay, as theirs did who laid the foundation of the temple, Ezra iii. 13. *When the noise of the shouts of joy could not be discerned from the noise of the weeping of the people.* What a damp does this cast upon our comforts, and what a sadness does it put upon our countenances! as it did on Nehemiah's, to hear that the remnant that were *left of the captivity were in such great affliction and reproach,* Neh. i. 3, 4.

Let us therefore, with the greatest tenderness, *remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them;* et us feel their burthens, and let not all the trou- ıle they are in seem little to us; let us pity them, ınd pray for them daily, and by a Christian sympa- hy suffer with them, as all the members of the body lo with a pained one. Let the truths they suffer for be ›recious to us, and the liberty they long for be va- ıued by us. When we begin to despise the manna, ınd to call it light bread, and when our full souls oathe the honey-comb, think what they would give or one of those peaceable opportunities, which we o easily neglect; and how they would welcome hose days of the Son of man, which we think re- urn too fast. Let their calamities also be warnings o us, to take heed of settling upon our lees, *because ve have been at ease from our youth*, Jer. xlviii. 11. Time was when they were as sure of their peace and iberty, as we can be of ours, and *thought their moun- ain stood strong, and should not be moved:* but God, ›y his dealings with them, will make all his churches o know, that they have no lease of their privileges, ›ut are tenants at will; that they may give diligence while they have the light, to believe and walk in it, *lest darkness come upon them.* When we begin to grow secure and careless, and to leave our first love, *let us go and see what God did to Shiloh*, Jer. vii. 12. and dread *the removing of our candlestick also*, Rev. ii. 5.

But is their wound incurable? Has God cast them off for ever? We trust not. *The rod of the wicked shall not always rest upon the lot of the right- eous*, Ps. cxxv. 3. *There is a time, a set time, to favour Zion*, Ps. cii. 13, 14. which undoubtedly will come. Let us therefore believe and hope, and pray and wait: *the vision is yet for an appointed time; and at the end of it shall speak and not lie. Did God bring back our captivity, and do such great things for us, whereof we are glad?* let us be earnest with God to complete the mercy of our peace, by working de- liverance for them, and *turning their captivity as streams in the south, being assured that they who sow in tears shall reap in joy*, Ps. cxxvi. 1, 3—5. Rev. xi. 8, 9. *The witnesses, though they were slain, yet are not buried; and the bones, though they are dead and dried, yet they are above ground in the open valley*, Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 2. which ministers some assistances to our hope that they shall rise again, and even these dry bones live.

5. Let us cordially concur with the other tribes of our English Israel, in driving the Canaanites out of our land; this was that which Moses indented with the two tribes for, when he settled them on that side Jordan, Numb. xxxii. 20. that they should give the best help they could to their brethren, in their war against the common enemy: and still there are Ca- naanites in our land; vice, and profaneness, and de- bauchery, are the enemies I mean, which war against both our civil and sacred interests; and, as it is said of the remainder of the Canaanites, Josh. xxiii. 13. *They are thorns in the eyes of all good men*, and a snare to us. It is too plain to be denied, that iniquity abounds among us, and goes barefaced; our air is infected with the poisonous and malignant breath of blasphemous oaths and curses, which are grown so common, that they seem to be idioms of our language. Our land is defiled with drunkenness and uncleanness, which some make a trade of, and others a sport of; the beauty and honour of our religion is stained by the profanation of the Lord's day, and an atheistical contempt of holy things. *How can we say we are not thus polluted*, Jer. ii. 23. *and shall not God visit for these things; shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* Have we not reason to expect that a deluge of judgments should fol- low such a deluge of impieties? And is any thing more the interest of the nation, than to endea- vour the rooting out of these Canaanites, that if possible they might not be among us; or at least the putting them under tribute, that they may not rule, or bear sway among us; which surely is not a thing impracticable.

Against these Canaanites, the government hath by repeated proclamations waged war; *and therein God hath given a banner to them that fear him, to be displayed, because of the truth and holiness*, Ps. lx. 4. And now the inquiry is, like that of Moses in the gate of the camp, Exod. xxxii. 26. *Who is on the Lord's side?* or that, Ps. xciv. 16. *Who will rise up for me against the evil doers, or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?* Who will put a hand to so good a work, as the reformation of the morals of our nation? Who will help to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end, and to drive the unclean spirit out of the land? Let us, in our places, be volunteers in this service, and cheerfully put our necks to this work of the Lord's, that we come not under the *brand put upon the nobles of Tekoa*, Neh. iii. 5. When the remains of the Canaanites made head so far, as mightily to oppress Israel, under Ja- bin and Sisera, Judg. iv. 23. it was the reproach of the two tribes on the other side Jordan, that they came not to the help of their brethren, but basely and ingloriously sneaked, when there was service to be done to the common interest. Gilead abode be- yond Jordan, and Reuben among his sheepfolds, Judg. v. 16, 17. which made their division by the river greatly lamented by all thinking men, and oc- casioned many searchings of heart. Let us be in- dustrious to prevent so ill an effect of our divisions, otherwise unhappy enough. Let us be willing to appear, willing to act, willing to venture, for the promoting of a reformation, which all good men agree to be necessary. Now is a time (when that blessed cause hath life in it, and we have so many good leaders to follow) to show ourselves for God,

*and valiant for the truth in the earth*, Jer. ix. 3. Are not evil doers afraid, nor ashamed to appear in opposition to religion and virtue? and shall we be either afraid or ashamed to appear for the defence of them? If we now sit still, and say, Let our brethren of the ten tribes drive out the Canaanites that are among themselves, and we will only look to our own border; surely (as Moses told the two tribes, Numb. xxxii. 22, 23.) *we have sinned against the Lord, and be sure our sin will find us out.* Nothing will contribute more to the healing of our breaches, and the uniting of us one to another in communion, than a hearty concurrence in this, wherein confessedly we are agreed. When God turns to *our people a pure language*, then, and not till then, *we shall serve him with one consent;* for betwixt them there is a manifest connexion, Zeph. iii. 9. Holiness and love, purity and unity, mutually befriend and advance each other.

6. Let us be able, with humble confidence, to appeal to God, that our acting separately in building us an altar, is not done in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord. That we may then approve ourselves to him in the integrity of our hearts, we must take heed *to our spirits: the Lord God of gods, he knows*, and he only knows, the thoughts and intents of the heart, and by them he judges of us, and of our actions; that we may approve ourselves to him, it therefore concerns us to do all according to the manner, the appointed manner, Neh. viii. 18. and in due order, 1 Chron. xv. 15. Let us see to it, that our eye be single, and our intentions sincere, and our ends right; for it is a pity a good work should be spoiled, and rendered unacceptable, by an ill principle; that what for the matter of it is good, should become otherwise by a mismanagement.

If it be in pride and vain-glory that we have built us an altar, only that we may make a fair show in the flesh, and be like the nations, then it is done in rebellion and in transgression. To be proud of any ornaments, but especially of those that belong to the solemn assemblies, very ill becomes those who are but dust and ashes, and ought especially to remember that they are so when they draw near to the Lord of glory, Ps. xxix. 2. *The beauty of holiness*, in which we are to worship the Lord, *is not that outward adorning of magnificent and curious structures, but the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible*, 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. To hide pride from his worshippers, God appointed that they should make him an *altar of earth*, Exod. xx. 24. or if of stone, *not of hewn stone*, v. 25. The garnishing and enriching of temples, by which a gay humour was indulged, and primitive plainness and simplicity lost, never did any real kindness to the church, but by degrees turned to its prejudice. *Hodie venenum funditur in ecclesiam—to-day is a poisonous mixture introduced into the church.* If it be in opposition to our brethren, or from a principle of envy or ill-will to them, it is in rebellion and in transgression; but I hope you have not so learned Christ. Our Master will never be pleased with that which is done from a spirit of contradiction to, or contention with, our brethren and fellow-servants: the hands lifted up in prayer, will never reach heaven, unless they be *lifted up without wrath and contention;* so it might be rendered, 1 Tim. ii. 8. without disputation. Jam. i. 20. *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*, i. e. it neither gains acceptance with him, nor does any real service to him. But if in building this altar, and in all our attendances upon it, we sincerely design the honour and glory of God in Christ, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of our own souls, and the souls of others; if we make every particular opportunity serviceable to the general interests of our Christianity, to further us in our way to God, and fit us for our rest in him; we may then rejoice in the testimony of our consciences, that it is not in rebellion or transgression against the Lord, but in simplicity and godly sincerity, that we have built us an altar.'

7. If the Lord knows our integrity, let us study how to let Israel know it also. Let us demonstrate our good principles, by our agreeable practices, and that will be the best and most effectual way to convince the world that we have not built this in rebellion, or in transgression against the Lord: our protestations of our integrity and good intentions will be of no avail, if our actions give our words the lie. When our lights are thus put on a candlestick, and not under a bushel, so that many eyes are upon us, we ought to take care that our light so shine before men, as that they may not only hear our good words, *but see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven*, Matt. v. 16. This is the method the apostle prescribes for silencing gainsayers, *We must effect it by well doing, for so is the will of God*, 1 Pet. ii. 15. Having a *good conscience*, let us evidence it by a *good conversation*, v. 16.

There are three ways by which, if our hearts be upright with God, Israel also he shall know it.

(1.) By our serious piety in all the instances of religious worship and devotion. Have we built this for religious worship, and under the umbrage of a zeal for its purity? Let us then approve ourselves religious worshippers; let your piety towards God appear in the constancy of your family devotions, which I think no good Christian, that has the charge of a family, dares live in the neglect of. Think not that a church here will excuse for the want of *a church in your houses*, Rom. xvi. 5. Though public worship have the preference, yet it must not supersede family worship: this ought you to have done, but not to leave the other undone. All the faithful seed of Abraham must herein be followers

f him; that wherever Abraham had a tent, God ad an altar, at which he called upon the name of ıe Lord. See Gen. xii. 8; xiii. 18. Let our ouses be Bethels, houses of God, that he dwelling ı them, we may dwell in the house of the Lord for ver, even all the days of our lives. Let Joshua's :solution be yours, *that whatever others do, you and our houses will serve the Lord*, Ps. xxiii. 6. Josh. :xiv. 15. Carry away the impressions made on our souls by public worship, and bring them with ou into your families, and there go over them again, hat they may be as a nail fastened in a sure place. t is supposed that the silver shrines for Diana, vhich we read of, Acts xix. 24. were copies of Diana's temple in miniature, which her worshippers ıad in their houses, for the use of their families. Had they such respect to a dunghill god, and shall ours be less to the Lord of the whole earth? Religion is then, and not till then, likely to flourish in our land, when all our families are praying families, and nurseries of piety. *Though the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob*, yet in them also he ought to be praised and *served as the God of all the families of Israel*, Ps. lxxxvii. 2. Jer. xxxi. 1.

Let your piety appear, also, by your decent and reverent deportment in our public assemblies. It is true God looks chiefly at the *heart, and bodily exercise profits little*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. if alone, it profits nothing; but it is as true, that in concurrence with our spirits, we are to *glorify God with our bodies, and to present them to him a living sacrifice*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Rom. xii. 1. Though the outward expressions of reverence and affection be not an infallible sign of a serious spirit, (a vain and trifling heart may be covered over with a grave and demure appearance,) yet the outward expressions of a carelessness and unconcernedness, I think, are a certain indication of an evil heart of unbelief: if the special presence and inspection of the angels, in our solemn assemblies, should forbid that which is unhandsome, as the apostle intimates, 1 Cor. xi. 10. much more should the eye of God upon us oblige us to observe a decorum. Does not even nature teach us, that when we are engaged in serious work, we ought to show ourselves serious in it? When we are worshipping the great God, we ought to express such an awe of him, as may strike an awe upon others; so that if an unbeliever should come into our assembly, as the apostle argues, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. he may acknowledge that God is among us, and the fear of God is in us of a truth. The Jews, since their worship came to be a rebellion and transgression against the Lord Christ, have been notoriously irreverent in it; as well did Isaiah prophesy of them, Matt. xv. 7.

It hath been turned to the reproach of the assemblies of dissenters, that in shunning superstition they have run into rudeness and irreverence. If any have given occasion for such a reflection, let them bear their own burthen; but I desire that we, in our assembly, may give no offence of that kind. Standing in prayer is spoken of as a gesture proper enough, Mark xi. 25. *When ye stand praying*, but kneeling is certainly the most fit and proper posture in adoration, and should be chosen rather where the convenience of the place (as I hope ours will) and the ability of the person will allow it. Paul, when a Pharisee, *stood and prayed*; but *afterwards he learnt to bow his knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Eph. iii. 14.

(2.) By our strict purity in our whole conversation: hereby we must let all that know us know that in the integrity of our hearts we have done this. Let it be our daily care and exercise *to keep consciences void of offence towards man as well as towards God:* to pretend to purity in our worship, and yet to allow impurity in our lives, is to contradict ourselves. Let all the days of our lives be of a piece with our sabbath days, and let a thread of holiness run through the web of all our actions. The best consecration of our place *will be to consecrate ourselves this day unto the Lord*, Exod. xxxii. 29. Let your sobriety and temperance in all your enjoyments, your justice and honesty in all your dealings, beautify that profession, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, Tit. ii. 1. and let not the glory of our assembly be stained by any practices unbecoming Christians: *Let your merchandise and your hire be holiness to the Lord*, as is prophesied of Tyre, Isa. xxiii. 18. and *let every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah*, even the common utensils of your houses, *be like the bowls before the altar*, Zech. xiv. 20, 21. of which *it was said, Be ye clean that bear them*, Isa. lii. 11. You that in building yourselves an altar, have done more than others, cannot evidence the sincerity of your hearts therein, if in the common instances of justice, and friendship, and charity, you do less than others. Remember the hint you just now had out of the psalm that was read in course, Ps. xciii. 5. *Holiness becomes thy house, O Lord, for ever*, and therefore unholiness very ill becomes any that belong to it. Remember also the good hint you had lately from another hand; that whatever disputes there are about holiness of places, there is none about the holiness of persons; the necessity of that, we are all agreed in, Heb. xii. 14. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*

(3.) By our peaceableness and charity towards our brethren, Jam. iii. 17, 18. The wisdom that is from above is not indeed pure, if it be not peaceable. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, and then it is likely to come up and flourish; they were the sons of peace that bid the gospel welcome, Luke x. 5, 6. Be at peace with those from whom you differ in opinion, and *receive them not with doubt-*

*ful disputation*, Rom. xiv. 1. Carefully watch that a diversity of communion cause not an alienation of affection, but be as ready to do any office of love and kindness and respect to those from whom you dissent, as to those with whom you consent; resolve, though you differ from them, you will not differ with them. If our separation be not schismatical in its own nature, (as for my own part I am well satisfied it is not,) let us not at any time make it so by our uncharitable censures, or our unchristian heats and passions.

*Be at peace also among yourselves.* Let your meeting to worship God in one place, prevent and put an end to all the little piques and quarrels which may happen at any time, and *never let us be three against two, and two against three, in this house.* Our peaceableness will be both our strength and beauty.

Let me therefore welcome you into this place, with the same exhortation with which St. Paul takes leave of his friends at Corinth, *Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in love and peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

A

# TREATISE ON BAPTISM.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

THE apostle, among his six principles of Christianity which constitute the foundation, reckons *the doctrine of baptisms*. Thus intimating, that baptism is to be asserted and adhered to, as a fundamental point in our religion. He uses the plural number (probably) in reference to the different kinds of baptism mentioned in the New Testament; where we read of *the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire*,[a] and *the baptism of blood*[b] or suffering, as well as of *the baptism of water*. The latter indeed alone is properly so called, the others are termed Baptisms, only by way of analogy and resemblance. And this is the baptism concerning which we are to make further inquiry. The baptism of water, i. e. in plain English, washing with water; though in our translation (and indeed in most others) the Greek word *baptism* is generally retained, as peculiarly significant.

Washing (or *baptizing*) with water, was long used before our Lord's time, not only as a common action, but as a religious rite. It was so used even in some heathen countries;* and still more among the professing people of God, from the earliest ages. It was prescribed by the law of Moses in almost all cases of ceremonial pollution, and on all occasions that called for peculiar purity. It was customary among the Jews to admit proselytes into their church by baptism, and even their own female children.† In conformity to this sacred custom, John, the harbinger of Christ, who was sent to proclaim his approach, and prepare the way for his coming, admitted persons his disciples by the same rite. A rite which our Lord himself owned, and honoured, by submitting to it; and that as a part of righteousness.

Water baptism then, when our Lord appeared, was no new thing: it had been applied, in every age of the church, and especially under the Mosaic dispensation, to religious uses. For this reason, among others, our Lord might probably choose it, as one of his institutions; thereby showing, that the spirit of his gospel was not a spirit of innovation and contradiction. And this institution he bequeathed to his church at his departure, as a sacred depositum, to be preserved pure and entire, without further alteration, till his second coming.

The nature of this ordinance, then, it will be proper more particularly to consider.

Those ordinances of worship which are *moral*, and of natural and perpetual obligation, have no difficulty in their explication, (we readily understand what praying, and praising, and reading the word of God are,) but those institutions which are *positive*, require a fuller illustration. Concerning them, the question should be asked, *What mean ye by this service?* (as concerning the Lord's passover, Exod. xii. 26.) And the rather, because unsanctified understandings are so unapt to receive, and so prone to mistake, such institutions. It is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, that in a Christian nation there are so many who bring their children readily enough to baptism, and would take it very hard if it were denied them, who yet understand no more of the ordinance, than that it is the custom of their country, and the usual time of naming their children, and treating their friends. It is therefore requisite to inquire a little into the true nature of this ordinance. And,

FIRST. In general, it is a *sacrament*.

This indeed is a Latin word, and therefore not to be found in the Scriptures; but it is a word which

[a] Matt. iii. 11. [b] Mark x. 38.

* By baptism, disciples were initiated into the secrets of Mythra and Isis, and the priests of Cotyttus were called Baptæ, because by baptism solemnly admitted into their office.

† The Jewish doctors had a tradition, that when the Messiah should come, there would be so many proselytes, that they could not be circumcised, but should be baptized.

the church has long used, and therefore we willingly receive it. Among the Latins, it was used to express an *oath;* (which has ever been accounted a sacred thing;) and more particularly a *military oath;* the oath which soldiers took to be true to the government, obedient to their generals, and never to quit their post, or run their colours.

Waving a discussion of the several definitions of a sacrament, we may acquiesce in Paul's description of one, Rom. iv. 11. where speaking of circumcision, (the initiatory sacrament of the Old Testament,) he calls it *a sign*, and *a seal of the righteousness of faith.*

The tree of life was a sacrament to Adam in innocency; a sign and seal of the covenant of works; *Do this and live.* Since the fall (by which our intellectual faculties are sadly depraved, and the veil of flesh thickened) we have much more need of sacraments; outward and sensible representations of things spiritual, to carry them home with the greater clearness to our understandings, with the more convincing certainty to our faith, and with the stronger impression to our affections. When the sanctified soul shall be released from the body of flesh, or when re-united to it refined and made spiritual, there will be no need of sacraments. These glasses shall be laid aside, when we shall see *eye to eye*, the distant object being brought nearer, and the debility of the organ cured.

But in the mean time, we are, with a cheerful thankfulness, and a ready compliance, to acknowledge the great goodness of God, in condescending to lisp to us in our own language; and to represent, seal, and apply to our souls things spiritual, by those things which are natural and ordinary. Thus doth Christ, in the sacraments, *tell us earthly things*, (as some understand John iii. 12.) i. e. spiritual things clothed with earthly expressions; (as there the mystery of sanctification by the metaphor of a new birth;) and if we do not believe, and understand, how should we apprehend those things, if they were spoken to us in their own abstract and simple notions, and in the language of the upper world? God, in the sacraments, speaks to us *after the manner of men; uses similitudes*;[c] not only to our ears, as by the ministry of the prophets, but to our eyes, that, if it be possible, spiritual things may that way insinuate themselves into, and get possession of, our hearts.

Thus it hath pleased God to deal with men, in his covenant transactions with them. When he made a covenant with Noah and his sons, never again to drown the world, or interrupt the succession of day and night, he gave them a sacrament, the *bow in the clouds;* (Gen. ix. 12, 13.) which doubtless was there before, (whenever there was a like disposition of the air,) but never till then a token of the covenant.

Sacraments are instituted to be,

I. Signs.

Not natural signs, as smoke is a sign of fire, but voluntary and instituted. Not purely intellectual signs, as the sign of the prophet Jonas, but sensible and visible.* Not signs barely for memorials, as the heap of stones in Jordan, but signs that do exhibit, and, as instruments, convey. So that the essence, or formal nature, of a sacrament, doth consist in a relative union between the sign and the thing signified.†

II. Seals.

Not bare signs, as the map of a lordship represents that lordship to every one who looks upon it; but such signs as deeds, or charters of feoffment, sealed and delivered, which convey the lordship to the feoffee, upon such conditions; and give him a right and title to the premises, to all intents and purposes, upon the performance of those conditions. Thus the rainbow, Gideon's fleece, the coal from the altar that touched Isaiah's lips, and many others, were not only signs signifying, but signs confirming, the promises to which they were annexed.

But not to expatiate in this large field, let us confine our thoughts to the sacrament of *baptism.* In which (as the nature of a sacrament requires) there is a *sign*, and the thing signified by it.

I. A sign.

And that is washing with water. The *element* is water; the *action*, washing with that water. And here, if we inquire why this sign was appointed for the ordinance of admission, this and no other, it must be referred to the will of the Lord Jesus, who instituted it. And his *will*, in this as in every thing else, is most certainly his *wisdom.* But it may be useful to observe what kind of a sign it is. And,

1. Washing with water is a common thing; common to all persons, to all times, and therefore fitly chosen to be stamped for an ordinance, whereby to admit persons into the belief of the *common salvation.* Jude 3. Such the gospel salvation is. Therefore, in the other sacrament, eating and drinking are the sacramental actions, which are also common actions, used by all the world; for Christ is a Saviour to all, and whoever will, may come and take of the waters of life.

As long as the church was confined to one people, the sign of admission was a thing very unusual, perhaps to note the peculiarity of that dispensa-

c Hos. xii. 10.

* Sacraments are *verba visibilia, ορατα συμβολα των νοουμενων.*

† This, Alice Driver, one of the female martyrs, urged to her examiners, when she was pressed to give her opinion of the sacrament of the altar; she asked, What is a sacrament? and being answered, It is a sign: Very true, (said she,) then it is not the thing signified.

tion; but now the veil is rent, and the partition wall taken away, Infinite Wisdom hath appointed the *common salvation* to be sealed by a *common action*.

2. Washing with water is a cheap thing.

It puts us to no expense; which may intimate that the poor are welcome to Christ as well as the rich. If he had intended to have taken the rich only into the bond of the covenant, he would probably have appointed some costly ordinance of admission, which would have been more agreeable to the state and spirit of the rich, and within the reach of them only: but God hath called and chosen *the poor of this world*.[d] In point of acceptance with God, rich and poor stand upon the same level; and therefore; since the poor cannot reach a costly ordinance, God will have the rich stoop to a cheap one. The ceremonial institutions were many of them chargeable; and good reason, because that dispensation had more of the promise of the life that now is. When God had freely given the Israelites *so good a land, houses full of all good things*, (a very considerable grant in that covenant,) they could not complain, if he required, as a chief rent by way of acknowledgment, the *lambs out of their flocks*, and the *bullocks of their stalls*. And yet even then, in divers cases, poverty was considered, as Lev. xii. 8. But now, under the gospel, the appointments are cheap. Christ will reject none for their poverty. As in other things, so in holy ordinances, *rich and poor meet together*.[e] In Christ Jesus there is neither *bond nor free*.[f]

3. Washing with water is a plain thing.

And the perfection of a gospel ordinance lies much in its simplicity. Baptism is an ordinance which will neither puzzle the understanding with the intricacy, nor burthen the memory with the multitude and variety, of its circumstances. *It is a highway, and a way* not hard to hit, *the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein*.[g] The institution of the water of purification, appointed by the Levitical law, was attended with so many nice circumstances, to be religiously observed, as did not only clog it, and make it difficult, but cloud it, and make it obscure. It was so with the other ceremonial appointments. But the New-Testament baptism is plain. Nothing appointed, but only, *Go and baptize them*: the necessary circumstances are left, partly to Christian prudence, and partly to the directions which the nature of the thing gives. And for additional ceremonies, the institution knows none. It should seem, that some have thought it too plain to please the luxuriant fancies of *men of corrupt minds*, and therefore have been patching and painting it, and tricking it up with their own inventions, adding I know not what significant (or rather insignificant) ceremonies of their own: (witness the Roman ritual:) but our great Master, who came to abolish the law of commandments, and to introduce a spiritual worship, I am confident, will, another day, give those no thanks who think so meanly of the comeliness he hath put upon his spouse, as thus to dress her up in the tawdry attire of a harlot; as if that would improve, which doth indeed impair and spoil, her beauty.

4. Washing with water is an easy thing.

It was not a causeless complaint that was made of the ceremonial law, that it was a *yoke, which neither their fathers, nor they, were able to bear*.[h] Those who are under it are said to be *in bondage to the rudiments of this world*. And some think, it is this which our Lord supposes those to be *weary of, and heavy laden with*,[i] whom he invites to submit to his *yoke*, (i. e. his institutions,) *as very easy and light*. And, certainly, in this ordinance there is nothing hard or uneasy; no burthen of which there is the least pretence to complain. Indeed, such are the privileges which attend the ordinance, that if our Master had bid us do some great thing, would we not have done it, rather than come short of them?[k] Much more, when he only saith unto us, Wash and be clean; wash and be Christians.

5. Washing with water is a safe thing.

The ordinance of admission under the law was a painful and bloody rite, and proved fatal to the unwary *Shechemites*; but there is neither pain nor peril in baptism. The Lord hath made it appear that he is *for the body*, by appointing an ordinance so consistent with its ease and safety. It is so safe, that it may be applied to infants, without the least difficulty or danger; a presumptive evidence, that Christ designed it for them.

6. Washing with water is an *expressive* and significant thing.

So it hath been reckoned in other cases; and so it is in this institution. How could it be otherwise, when chosen by Infinite Wisdom, by him *who did all things well*? Though the significancy of it ariseth from the institution, yet it hath a peculiar aptness so to signify.* But this brings us to consider,

II. The *thing signified*; the *substance* represented by this *shadow*.

This, like the kernel in the nut, is the main thing in the ordinance, viz. the meaning of this service. Now the outward sign is such, as that we are purely passive therein; *washed with water*; not washing ourselves; which intimates, that the chief thing intended to be signified, is that which God in the covenant doth for us, (the communications of his grace and favour, in which we are receptive,) and our obligations and engagements to him, only by way of necessary consequence. The washing with water implies the doing of something *for us*, and *upon us*; whence we infer, something to be done *by us*.

d Jam. ii. 5. e Prov. xxii. 2. f Gal. iii. 11. g Isa. xxxv. 8. h Gal. iv. 3. i Matt. xi. 28. k 1 Kings v. 13.

* Neque in sacramentalibus speciebus, quæsivit Dominus dignitatem sed aptitudinem.

1. The water in baptism signifies the *blood of Christ;* and the sprinkling of that for justification. The *washing of the body with pure water*, represents *the sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience.* One great promise of the new covenant is, *that God will be merciful to our unrighteousness*, so that the seal of the covenant, as it is a covenant of reconciliation, is principally intended to be the seal of a pardon. Hence, the Nicene creed supposes the remission of sins to be principally intended in baptism: *I believe in baptism for the remission of sins.* Now, for as much as sin is pardoned, only in and through the merit of Christ's death and sufferings, that pardon is signified, and sealed, by washing with water, which represents the application of Christ's blood to the soul. The blood of the legal victim was necessary to make atonement, (Heb. ix. 22.) therefore the benefits of redemption are often attributed to the blood of Christ, as the meritorious and procuring cause; especially remission of sin. See 1 John i. 7. *The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin;* and Rev. i. 5. *Washed us from our sins in his own blood.* And his blood, in allusion to the legal purifications, is called the *blood of sprinkling*, Heb. xii. 24. Compare Heb. ix. 13, 14. Cyril calls baptism the antitype of Christ's sufferings. His passion, with the fruits and benefits of it, are represented and applied, in this ordinance, by washing with water. Hence Ananias's exhortation to Paul, *Arise and wash away thy sins*, Acts xxii. 16. It is generally supposed to have been in the person of the suffering Jesus, that David complained, *I am poured out like water*, Ps. xxii. 14. And there is something of the same metaphor in that expression, *He poured out his soul unto death*, (Isa. liii. 12.) as water was poured out, especially in sacrificing. See 1 Kings xviii. 35. compared with 1 Sam. vii. 6. Thus was a fountain opened, the rock smitten, that thence streams of water might issue for the use of Israel. In baptism this is applied. So that therein, the forgiveness of sins, upon repentance, is sealed by the application of Christ's blood.

It is observable, that the grant of remission is, in both the sacraments, signified and applied, by something that primarily represents the blood of Christ, by which that remission was procured; in baptism by water, in the Lord's supper, by wine. The design of God herein, is to convey spiritual and heavenly blessings to us, in such a way as may most advance the honour of Jesus Christ, and recommend him, and his salvation, to our esteem and affection. He will have us to see all the precious privileges of the new covenant flowing to us in the blood of Jesus. In the water of baptism, we may see *(pretium sanguinis)* the price of blood, written upon all our benefits; which should engage us to prize them, and to glorify God with them. *It is the blood of these men*, saith David; (1 Chron. xi. 19.) only blood exposed; but this is the blood of the man Christ Jesus; blood actually shed. What a value then should we put upon it!

2. The water in baptism signifies the Spirit and grace of Christ, and the sprinkling of that for sanctification.

It must signify this, as well as pardon by the blood of Christ, for they are inseparable in the application of them. Ye are washed, (saith the apostle,) viz. in baptism, which signifies, both that *ye are sanctified*, and that *ye are justified*;[l] for they always go together. The *water and the blood* came together out of the pierced side of the dying Redeemer, John xix. 34. Wherever Jesus Christ is *made of God righteousness to any soul*, it is certain, that he is made of God, unto that soul, *sanctification.*[m]

Fallen man is to be looked upon, not only as guilty, but as defiled; not only as liable to the punishment of sin, but subject to the power and dominion of sin: and therefore as standing in need, not only of a *relative* change, in justification, by the righteousness of Christ imputed; but of a *real* change, in sanctification, by the grace of Christ implanted. And this also is signified in baptism: which is therefore called *the washing of regeneration*, Tit. iii. 5. Yea, not only *signified*, but *sealed* and *applied*, conditionally. As is the promise, so is the sacrament; the seal operates, as it is led and directed by the words of the deed to which it is affixed. Now the promise is, *Turn ye at my reproof, behold I will pour out my spirit unto you:* those who are baptized may, upon their turning, therefore, plead their baptism as the seal of that promise.

Now these two, the blood of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ, include all the benefits of redemption: some are the acts of God's grace *for us*, others are the work of God's grace *in us;* and both these are signified and sealed in baptism. If then we be not wanting to ourselves, we may from our baptism fetch a comfortable assurance, that God will not be wanting to us. That we might have strong consolation, he has instituted a sign, apt and proper, to signify these two main springs of our comfort and happiness, the merit and grace of Christ; and the particular application of them to us. For being baptized into Christ Jesus, we are *baptized into his death.*[n]

SECOND. Having thus opened the nature of this ordinance in general, as it is a sacrament, we come next more particularly to inquire into the meaning of this service.

And our best way will be, to have recourse to the institution, which gave it being as an ordinance, and put the stamp upon it. Bring the word to the

l 1 Cor. vi. 11. m 1 Cor. i. 30. n Rom. vi. 3, 5.

ment, and that makes the sacrament. As the impression of the seal upon the wax, and the solemn livery of the instrument so sealed, puts a great lue on that, which, otherwise, is but a mean, comon thing. And therefore, as from the institution must take *warrant* for the practice, so from the stitution we must take *light*, touching the nature the ordinance. When a question was put to our rd Jesus, by the Pharisees, concerning marriage, refers them to the institution and original law, Matt. xix. 3, 4.) to teach us to go by the same rule other ordinances. Run up the stream of the obrvation (which in a long course sometimes conacts filth) to the spring of the institution, and see hat it *was from the beginning*. We are taking that ethod, in the explication of this ordinance.

The institution of baptism was at Christ's sixth ppearance after his resurrection, viz. that at the ountain in Galilee, not only to the eleven, but to any others of the disciples, probably the five hunred brethren, spoken of 1 Cor. xv. 6. He had menoned this appointed meeting, both before and after is resurrection: and whereas most of his other apearances were occasional and surprising, this seems have been solemn and expected. And here, the our evangelists explain and enlarge each other. Matthew, who wrote first, gives the fullest account, chap. xxviii. 19, 20.) *Go ye, therefore, and teach ll nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, nd of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them o observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: nd, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the orld.* Where, we have not only a *warrant* to nake baptism lawful, but an order to make it a luty.

1. He premiseth his own authority; his commission under the broad seal of heaven, (*v.* 18.) *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

As a divine person, all power was originally and essentially his; but as Mediator, all power was given him. What that power more especially was, he himself tells us, (John xvii. 2.) *Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.* So that this mediatorial power was an authoritative disposition of the eternal states of the children of men, (Rev. i. 18.) *the keys of hell*, (or the unseen world,) including the keys of heaven too. *The world to come was put in subjection*, not to *angels*, but *to Christ*, Heb. ii. 5. Jesus Christ is *set (fixed, inaugurated, enthroned) King upon the holy hill of Zion*:[o] constituted absolute sovereign in his church; invested with legislative power. As King, he hath sole authority to institute and appoint ordinances which shall be binding; and it is certainly a daring, and very unjustifiable, presumption, for any creature (though calling himself by ever so great and pompous a name) to assume to himself a like power in the church. To institute ordinances is Christ's prerogative, and a branch of his glory which he neither doth nor will give to another. Our Lord Jesus *glorified not himself* herein, *but was called of God to it*, (Heb. v. 4, 5.) and his call was completed when he was raised from the dead. Then it was that the Father said unto him, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* Compare Acts xiii. 33.

It was after his resurrection that our Lord claimed all power. We read of power given him before, (Matt. ix. 6.) *power to forgive sins* —εξουσιαν εχει; but here —*πασα εξουσια, all power.* It was by dying that he won the *name above every name.*[p] Now he was entering upon the exercise of his authority; was hastening to the *far country, to receive for himself a kingdom.*[q] It was part of the glory which he claimed as the recompence of his sufferings, John xvii. 4, 5.

Power in *heaven* and *in earth*, i. e. in all places: heaven and earth comprehend the whole universe, Gen. i. 1. Jesus is the only universal monarch. He has power in heaven over the angels, (Eph. i. 10.) and power on earth to subdue the Gentile world to his sceptre.

2. He directs his commission to the apostles and their successors. (Compare John xx. 21. *As the Father hath sent me, so send I you:* which speaks not equality of power, but similitude of mission.) Having showed how the Father had sent him, he here sends them. *Go ye:* ye apostles, primarily; (for they were the master-builders who laid the foundation;) including, likewise, their successors in the pastoral office to the end of the world. Ministers are the *stewards* of this, as well as the other *mysteries of God.*[r] And much of the wisdom and goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ appears in his appointing such officers in the church. Now he was *ascending on high, he gave gifts unto men;* and they were precious gifts; not only apostles, prophets, evangelists, (extraordinary ministers,) but pastors and teachers, (ordinary ministers,) to continue in succession to the end of time. Though the keys are said to have been given to Peter, perhaps because he was the first who opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, yet all the apostles, and in them all Christian ministers, were invested with the same power; John xx. 23. a power of admitting into the Christian church, according to gospel terms. Nor need we contend for an uninterrupted succession, in a right line, from the apostles; for this power is not received from the ordainers, but from Christ; and ordination is only the solemn designation, approbation, and benediction, of a person judged duly qualified to be the subject of this power.

3. He extends their commission to all *nations. Go ye;* a word of command and encouragement:

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[o] Ps. ii. 6. [p] Phil. ii. 8. [q] Luke xix. 12. [r] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

Go and fear not; have not I sent you? Those whom Christ sends, have often need of encouragement against their fears, when those whom he sends not, run with boldness. These words broke down the partition wall, which had so long kept out the Gentiles. Hitherto, in Judah only was God known; a little spot; but now the veil is rent, and the despised Gentiles admitted into the holiest. The baptism of John was only for the Jews; the morning star appeared only in that horizon; and even the Sun of righteousness, while rising, was pleased to confine his influences to the *lost sheep of the house of Israel.* When he first sent out his disciples, he charged them *not to go into the way of the Gentiles;* (Matt. x. 5.) but now the commission is enlarged, *Go ye into all the world,* Mark xvi. 15. The enmity between the Jews and Gentiles had been very great; but that enmity was now slain, and they *both became one sheepfold, under the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls.*

*Teach all nations;* i. e. all whom ye can reach. Exclude none out of the church who are willing to come in, i. e. none who do not exclude themselves. And accordingly, their sound did go *into all the earth, and their words to the end of the world,* Rom. x. 18. *The heathen* were given to Christ for an inheritance; and therefore he sends his apostles into all the territories of his dominions. He having purchased, they must proffer, a *common salvation.*

4. The commission itself is, *Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Here is our warrant, without which we would not, we dare not, baptize. The word which we translate *teach* is, μαθητευσατε, and I think is not well translated. It is a different word which is used v. 20, *teaching them to observe,* διδασκοντες—*Go, disciple all nations,* I think it should be rendered.* Make them my disciples, i. e. admit them my scholars. I find the word used only here, and in two other places; viz. Matt. xiii. 52. *every scribe* (μαρητευθεις) *discipled unto the kingdom of heaven,* (i. e. a Christian scribe, or such a disciple of Christ as is arrived at the standing and proficiency of a scribe,) *is like a man that is a householder:* and Matt. xxvii. 57. concerning Joseph of Arimathea, ος και αυτος εμαθητευσε τω Ιησου, *one who had given up himself as a disciple to Jesus;* had discipled it, or been ranked among the disciples of Jesus; or (as some understand it) had discipled others to Jesus. So that the word here must signify, to make disciples, as the phrase is John iv. 1. i. e. to admit them into the school of Christ. Thus a Jewish ear would readily apprehend it; for, as Lightfoot observes, discipling was not of persons already taught, but to the end that they might be taught. And in their schools, a person was made תלמיד, a scholar, or disciple, when he gave up himself to be trained up by such a master. *Proselytum me fac, ut me doceas.*

I insist so much upon the right sense of the word, not only to vindicate the text from the mistake of those, who will have none baptized (of whomsoever born) till they are thoroughly taught, grounding it on the words of the institution; (which, if rightly Englished, would intimate no such thing; for though infants are not capable of being taught, they are capable of being discipled;) but also, from hence, to explain the nature of the ordinance. Which is,

I. A solemn admission into the visible church of Christ. *Go, disciple all nations;* open the door to them all; and those who are willing admit by *baptizing them;* let that be the sign and ceremony of admission.

II. A seal of the covenant of grace. *Baptizing them in* (or into) *the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* So that we need look no further for the meaning of this service.

I. Baptism is an ordinance of Christ, whereby the person baptized is solemnly admitted a member of the visible church.

It is a discipling ordinance. The professors of the Christian religion were first called disciples, till at Antioch the name was changed, and they were called *Christians,* Acts xi. 26. To disciple all nations then, (to speak according to the change of the title,) is to Christianize all nations. So that baptizing is, as it is commonly called, (significantly enough if it were duly considered,) *Christening.* Not making a person a Christian, *in foro Cæli*—in the judgment of Heaven, but declaring him a Christian, *in foro ecclesiæ*—in the judgment of the church.

1. I say of the *visible* church.

Not of the invisible church, (as it is called,) *the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven,* but the visible church; comprehending all that profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him. Many are baptized, and so taken into that number, who yet remain *in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity;* witness Simon Magus, Acts viii. 13, 23. But, *de secretis non judicat ecclesia*—the church does not judge the secrets of men. Baptism is an ordinance of the visible church, appointed for the admission of visible church members; admission, not into the internal communion, but only into that which is visible and external, in the profession of faith, and participation of sacraments.

2. I say the *visible church,* meaning the catholic universal church.

Baptism is not to be looked upon as the door of admission into any particular church. The eunuch could not be admitted into such a church, and yet was baptized. And hence appears the mistake of those who maintain, that because they were baptized

* Discipulate (saith Bullinger, with an apology for the harshness of the word) sive facite mihi discipulos.

to the church of England, they are therefore bound ever to leave it, nor attempt any alterations in it.

3. He who seriously professeth faith in Christ, id obedience to him, but is not yet baptized, hath sort of church-membership, but remote, imperfect, id irregular. Many in the primitive times, upon mistaken apprehension of the unpardonableness sin committed after baptism, deferred it long, ome even till the dying moment,) who yet are not be looked upon as outcasts. Many of the martyrs ied in the state of catechumens. So that baptism oth not give the title, but recognize it. Only educe ie *power* into *act*, and complete that church membership, which before was only *(in fieri)* in the oing.

Now, when I say that by baptism we are brought nto the church, I mean,

1. That we are added to the number. Thus, Acts ii. 41.) those that were baptized, are said to e *added to the church*, *i. e.* to the number of visible ielievers. The number of the church militant is laily decreasing by death; baptism is appointed for illing up the vacancy, that there may not want a church to stand before the Lord on earth, while the un and the moon endureth.

2. We are entitled to the privileges of the church. Church privileges are either such as are peculiar to true believers, even union and communion with Christ in grace and glory, and fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, by the Holy Ghost; (and though baptism does not give a title to these, it seals and ratifies that title to true believers;) or,

Such as are common to visible believers. And these, baptism, duly administered, doth entitle us to, and invest us in.

Now the privileges of visible church-membership which baptism confers, are such as these:

1. Honour. To be set apart among the peculiar people, and numbered among the chosen. Is it not an honour to bear the name, and wear the livery, of the Lord Jesus? to be called Christians, a people near unto him? To be baptized, is a great preferment; it is to be enrolled in a very honourable corporation; admitted into a society upon all accounts truly great and noble.

2. Safety. The visible church is under God's peculiar care and government. He is *a defence upon all its glory*.[s] Those who are taken into the church (to borrow the Jews' expression) are gathered under the wings of the Divine Majesty; and so are often sheltered from those calamities to which others lie exposed. Baptism is compared to the ark (1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.) which sheltered even Ham from the universal deluge. It is a privilege to be on the protected side.

3. Communion. Baptism gives a title to the ordinances. Those who were baptized, we presently find *in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*, Acts ii. 41, 42. The word, and prayer, and the Lord's supper, and church fellowship, are the ordinances which those who are baptized may (as they become capable) lay claim to. And is it not a privilege to be interested in the ministers of Christ? *Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas;* variously gifted, but all their gifts bestowed upon the visible church, and intended for the good of its members? the labours, the sufferings, of ministers, for the church's sake? See 1 Cor. iii. 22. and Eph. iv. 11, 12. Is it not a privilege, to be a partaker of the prayers of all the churches? to be remembered by them at the throne of grace, as one with them? Is it not a privilege to sit down with them at the table of the Lord? to be admitted to that feast, that altar, which they have no right to eat of who serve the tabernacles? Is not the communion of saints a privilege? to have a share in the friendship and affection of all who fear God, and the right hand of fellowship in all the ordinances? to be with those among whom Jesus walks, and with whom God is of a truth? to have a nail in God's holy place?

4. Opportunity. The lively oracles are committed to the visible church. It is in the church that the ordinary means of salvation are; *he hath showed his word unto Jacob: there God is known, and his name is great:* there *the joyful sound is heard;* and *blessed are they that hear it*.[t] The visible church, though it is not the fountain of truth, (as the papists would have it, deriving the authority of the Scriptures from the dictates of the church,) yet is the channel of conveyance. It is the *pillar and ground of truth;* (both the body and basis of the pillar;) not as the pillars of a house, on which the house is built, (for in this sense, the church is built upon the truth, not the truth upon the church,) but as the pillar, which hath an inscription upon it, or to which a proclamation is affixed, it holds forth to the view of all what is so put upon it. Thus the church is the pillar of truth. It is a great privilege to be taken into the church, for that is the Goshen, the land of light; out of which there are no ordinary means of saving knowledge. Those who are taken into the church, have gospel discoveries and gospel offers made unto them: and (which is a great advantage, and contributes to the efficacy of the word) by being admitted into the church, gospel offers have more hold of them than when they were without.

3. We come under the laws of the church. Not of this or that particular church, but the universal church. I mean, that being admitted to the privileges, we are engaged to the duties, of the communion of saints.

[s] Isa. iv. 5, 6.

[t] Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20.

The laws of the church are; to own the ministers of it, and to esteem them highly in love for their work's sake; to adhere to its ordinances, and to receive, observe, and keep them pure and entire, as part of the church's treasure;* to keep to the fellowship of the saints, not *forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but exhorting one another daily;* to do good in an especial manner to the *household of faith*, i. e. *to all in every place, who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, both their Lord and ours;* to own all baptized Christians as our brethren and fellow-members; and to comfort and edify one another, as we have ability and opportunity. Thus baptism is an ordinance of admission into the visible church. It is also,

II. A seal of the covenant of grace.

This I gather from those words of the institution, baptizing them *in* (or *into*) *the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

For the opening of this, I shall endeavour to show what the covenant of grace is; and then, (from the words of the institution,) how baptism is a seal of this covenant.

1. What this covenant of grace is.

A covenant properly signifies, a voluntary compact or agreement between distinct persons, touching the disposal of things in their power, to their mutual content and advantage. But when we speak of God's covenanting with men, we must remember that he is the sovereign Ruler and Owner of mankind, and therefore, that his transactions with us are not mere covenants, as amongst men, between equals, or at least between persons who were antecedently disengaged. No, God is *the lawgiver* who hath authority *to save and to destroy.*[u] But the revelation of his will, which he hath made, for the direction of our duty to him and our expectations from him, is therefore called a covenant, and proposed to us under that form, because infinite goodness would deal with us in a rational way; and thus *draw us with the cords of a man;* (such cords as men are used to be drawn with;) and that his righteousness in the ruin of the refusers, might be the more magnified.

The same revelation of the will of God concerning man, may be considered, therefore, either as a law, backed with promises and threatenings as sanctions, and so there needs not the creature's consent; or as a covenant, and so there must be a restipulation from the creature. Now the sacraments relate to this revelation, as a covenant, i. e. a promise upon a condition, to which the sacraments are annexed as seals. The promises are, of reconciliation, relation, and recompence; the conditions are, faith, repentance, and sincere obedience to the whole will of God. This covenant is founded on free grace, and purchased by the blood of Christ. It was revealed, *at sundry times, and in divers manners*, to the Old-Testament saints; and now, under the New Testament, may be considered two ways; viz.

1. In its internal administration: as savingly closed with by true believers, who join themselves unto the Lord, by a free and hearty consent, which entitleth them to the saving benefits of this covenant. And it is not to this, that the sacraments are appropriated: for we find Simon Magus baptized; and multitudes on the left hand of Christ at the great day, who had eaten and drank in his presence. And the stewards of the mysteries of God would remain under perpetual doubts and uncertainties, if they were to go by this rule in applying the seals. *The Lord* infallibly *knows them that are his*, but we do not. In this internal administration, the Spirit is the seal, Eph. i. 13.

2. In its external administration: and so considered, all who profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are in the covenant at large, and have a right to the seal. As the church of the Jews; *with many of whom God was not well pleased; yet to them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises*, Rom. ix. 4.

Now the sum and substance of this covenant is, that *God will be to us a God, and we shall be to him a people*, Heb. viii. 30. This is frequently set down in Scripture as the abridgment of the covenant; which includes all the other promises and conditions. All the privileges of the covenant are summed up in this one, *that God will be to us a God;* and all the duties of the covenant are summed up in this, *that we must be to him a people.* And herein it is certainly well ordered and sure; is all our salvation, and should be all our desire. I am to show,

2. How baptism is a seal of this covenant.

Covenanting signs and ceremonies have generally been used by all nations by which contracts have been confirmed and ratified; and those signs, not natural, but instituted. We call this ordinance a seal, because with us the usual way of confirming contracts is by *sealing;* which gives validity to the covenant, and mutual assurance of the sincerity of the covenanters; who do hereby, with the more solemnity, oblige themselves to the performance of the covenant. Now *God being willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, hath confirmed it*, not only *with an oath*, but with *a seal, that by all these immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie*, (or to put a cheat upon his creatures,) *we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge* to the everlasting covenant, *to lay hold on that hope* as the horns of the altar, Heb. vi. 17, 18.

There was a covenanting sign instituted by the

* The κειμηλια of the family.

[u] James iv. 1.

Jewish law, which was very significant; in case of a person's binding himself perpetually to his master, his ear was to be bored with an awl to the door-post, by his master, (Exod. xxi. 6.) by which the master engaged himself to continue his protection and provision, and the servant became obliged to continue his duty and obedience. Thus was the covenant sealed. Baptism is the seal of such a covenant between God and man; an act which obligeth us to be his willing servants for ever. More plainly, when I say that baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace, I mean,

1. That God doth, *in* and *by* that ordinance, assure us that he is willing *to be to us a God*, according to the tenor of the covenant. A sense of our meanness as creatures, especially of our vileness as sinners, might make us despair of the honour and happiness of such an interest and relation; this ordinance therefore is appointed, not only to convince us that God is reconcilable, but to convey to us all the benefits of reconciliation upon gospel terms. This is the covenant, (Gen. xvii. 7.) *To be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee*, and in token thereof, (*v.* 10.) *you shall be circumcised.* And forasmuch as our defilements by sin are the greatest discouragements of our faith in God as our God, to obviate those discouragements, the instituted seal is a significant sign of our cleansing from those defilements.

2. That God doth, *in* and *by* that ordinance, engage us to be to him a people.

His creating us, and preserving us, and all the gracious methods of his providence concerning us, engage us *to be to him a people*: because *he made us, and not we ourselves*, it follows, *that we are his people*, Ps. c. 3. But he doth by this ordinance lay a stronger and more explicit tie upon us to be his; *bores our ear to his door-post*; takes us to be *a people near unto him*; obliges us, not only by the bond of a law, but by the bond of a covenant, to be his. And all little enough; our corrupt hearts are so very treacherous and deceitful, and the enmity of the carnal mind so strong and inveterate. And because our cleansing is a necessary qualification for this relation, we are thus taken *to be to God a people*, by washing; for *he purifies to himself a peculiar people.*[v] The church *must be sanctified and cleansed, with the washing of water.*[w] We must first have our *consciences purged from dead works*, before we can acceptably *serve the living God.*[x] God doth in this ordinance, as it were, lay hold of us, set us apart for himself, and bind us to our duty; that if afterwards we be tempted sacrilegiously to alienate ourselves from him, and to serve under the opposite banner, the abiding obligations of this ordinance may help to keep us steady.

*I will be their God, and they shall be my people*, is the meaning of this service. It is a seal to those articles of agreement, which we find engrossed in the Scriptures, between God and man. An ordinance in which we are marked for God, and receive his image and superscription; marked for his service, marked for his salvation.

This being laid down in general, I now proceed to open it more particularly, from the institution; *baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* That is,

1. By authority from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

All the Persons of the blessed Trinity concur, as in our creation, (Gen. i. 26. *Let us make man,*) so to our redemption, salvation, and consolation. If we ask the question which Christ put concerning John's baptism, *The baptism of Jesus, is it from Heaven or of men?* it must be answered, *It is from Heaven.* Which stamps a very great honour upon the ordinance. Though to a carnal eye it may appear mean and contemptible; yet looking upon it as beautified with the sacred authority of Heaven, it appears truly great: and it is comfortable to those who are called to be *stewards of the mysteries of God*, that they act by an authority which will bear them out.

2. Invocating, or calling upon, the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

To do what we do in the name of God, is to sanctify all we do by prayer. So great an action as this, doth in an especial manner require that solemnity. It is prayer which fetcheth down that presence of God with the ordinance, and that blessing of God upon it, which is really the beauty and grace, the life and efficacy, of the ordinance.

3. There is more in it than this: we are baptized (εις ονομα) *into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*: i. e. in token of our believing in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

It is said, (1 Cor. x. 2.) that the Israelites were baptized, εις τον Μωσην—*into Moses*; which refers to (Exod. xiv. 31.) *they believed Moses*, or in Moses. Faith has in it an assent of the understanding, and a consent of the will; so that to be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is to be baptized into a solemn profession of these two things.

Our *assent* to the gospel revelation concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and our *consent* to a covenant relation to these divine Persons. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the Three Persons in the ever blessed Trinity, are in the New Testament not only *made known*, but tendered and offered to us. The gospel contains, not only a doctrine but a covenant, and by baptism we are brought into that covenant. The Jews were *baptized into Moses*, i. e. were thereby committed to the conduct of Moses: and so

v Tit. ii. 14. w Eph. v. 26. x Heb. ix. 14.

(Cor. i. 13, 15.) Paul pleads, that he baptized few or none, for this reason, lest they should say he baptized *in his own name*, i. e. into himself, and his own guidance as their ruler. So that to be *baptized in the name*, is to be solemnly devoted, and dedicated, to *the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Now this dedication to God, this entering into covenant with the whole Trinity, implies two things:

1. A renunciation of every thing that is contrary to God.

An oath of allegiance to God, as our rightful Sovereign, (and such an oath baptism is,) doth necessarily imply an oath of abjuration of all those powers and interests, which stand in opposition to, or competition with, his crown and dignity in our souls. The dedication of ourselves to the conduct of God, implies an utter disclaiming of the rule of the *devil*, the *world*, and the *flesh:* for what fellowship hath light with darkness, or how can two such masters be served? Hence we are said *to be buried with Christ by baptism*, and *planted in the likeness of his death*, (Rom. vi. 4, 5.) which intimates our dying to every lust and sin.

In the early ages of the church, when adult persons, who had been trained up under the power of Pagan delusions, were baptized Christians, it was required, that they should solemnly and expressly renounce that heathenism in which they had been brought up, and disclaim all relation to those gods they had been taught to worship; that none might be admitted, who retained any good opinion of their former idolatries and superstitions; and that those who were admitted, when tempted to apostasy, or base compliances, might be deterred by a serious reflection upon so solemn and express a renunciation: and a form of renunciation, similar to that of the ancient church, the English liturgy still uses. And even those who have laid aside the form of renunciation, as not countenanced by the precepts or examples of Scripture, allow that the renunciation itself is in effect made, being included in that dedication to God, which enters into the essence of Christian baptism.

Our dedication to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in that ordinance, then, necessarily implies a renouncing,

1. Of all subjection to Satan's rule. It is throwing off the devil's yoke. The sinful heart is represented in Scripture as Satan's palace, where he resides, where he reigns, where he keeps court, where he keeps garrison. Now our covenanting with God implies, a revolt from Satan's jurisdiction. Baptism wrests the keys of the heart out of the hands of the strong man armed, that the possession may be surrendered to him *whose right it is.* When, by baptism, we enlist ourselves under Christ's banners, we thereby proclaim war with the devil and all his forces.

God, in this ordinance, seals to us a deliverance from Satan, a rescue out of that house of bondage, that iron furnace, the terrifying and tormenting power of the devil; and we seal to him a compliance with that deliverance, by a steady opposition to his tempting, deceiving power, and a constant disowning of his conduct; keeping ourselves, that we may not be touched by that wicked one, in whom *the world lieth.*

2. Of all consent to fleshly lusts. The flesh is another enemy against which, in baptism, we declare war. We promise to quit the conduct of that *carnal mind which is enmity against God;*[e] engaging to be no longer guided by its dictates, and governed by its laws. The water of baptism is designed for our cleansing from the spots and defilements of the flesh. Hence, the apostle urgeth our baptism as a pressing motive to persuade us to the mortification of sin, Rom. v. 2, 3. Those who are *baptized into Christ*, have professedly *put on Christ;* and it is inconsistent with our putting on Christ, *to make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.*[f] Being in baptism enrolled among those pilgrims who are journeying towards Canaan, we engage to abstain from, and fight against, those *fleshly lusts that war against the soul.*[g]

3. Of all conformity to this present world.

We disclaim, in baptism, the customs of this world as our rule, the company of this world as our people, and the comforts of this world as our portion. Grotius thinks, that St. Paul hath an especial reference to the baptismal covenant, in that caution. (Rom. xii. 2.) *Be not conformed to this world.* Being by baptism engaged to conform to the designs and interests of the other world, we must needs be disengaged from a compliance with the counsels and concerns of this world. By this ordinance, we are engaged to swim against the stream of the impieties and follies of the age in which we live. We covenant not to take up with that *any good* which will satisfy the most of men; not to accept of a portion in this life. We are by Christ delivered from this present evil world, and in baptism we promise never to deliver ourselves up to it again, but *to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free.*

Thus stands our baptismal renunciation; which is notoriously contradicted by every wilful act of compliance with the allurements of the flesh, the world, and the devil. Baptism also implies,

2. A resignation of our whole selves to the Lord. This must always accompany that renunciation. *If thou wilt return, O house of Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me.* Our quitting the rule of sin, and Satan, and the world, is not that we may be lawless,

[e] Rom. viii. 7. [f] Rom. xii. 6. [g] 1 Pet. ii. 11.

but that we may be brought under the yoke of the Lord Jesus Christ. The tyranny is exchanged, not for anarchy, but for rightful sovereignty. It is not enough that we overrun the service of the citizen of the country, but we must submissively return to our Father's house. And this part of the covenant is sealed in this sacrament. In baptism we are not only *planted in the likeness of Christ's death*, but also *of his resurrection*, Rom. vi. 4, 5.

1. It is a resignation of ourselves, our whole selves; body, soul, and spirit. This is what is given up in baptism. (2 Cor. viii. 5. *First gave their own selves unto the Lord.)* It is not a resignation of our estates only, and relations, but ourselves. The soul, and all its faculties; the body, and all its parts, and powers, must be presented, as a living sacrifice. It is a marriage covenant, in which the parties mutually give themselves to each other; and in such a case, *if a man would give all the substance of his house for love*, (i. e. instead of it,) *it would be utterly contemned. I will be for thee, and thou shalt be for me*, that is the covenant, Hos. iii. 3. And therefore, in baptism, the seal is applied to the person, signifying the dedication of the man; as livery and seisin, is the giving of the premises intended to be conveyed. *Whose I am*, is the apostle's acknowledgment, Acts xxvii. 23.

2. It is a resignation to the Lord. That is the meaning of our being baptized into his name. It is declaring that we are his, and *subscribing with our hand to the Lord.*[h] Paul, when he is reproving the Corinthians for saying, *I am of Paul*, uses this argument, Were ye baptized *in the name* (or rather *into* the name) *of Paul?*[i] which intimates, that if they had been baptized into his name, they would have been *of* him. So that to be baptized into the name of God, is to be *of* God.

Now this resignation or dedication of ourselves to the Lord, is two-fold.

(1.) In respect of duty. We resign ourselves to God, to be ruled and governed by him; to be commanded by his laws without dispute or contradiction: saying, as Paul, (Acts ix. 6.) *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do. Other lords have had dominion, but from henceforth, by thee only will I make mention of thy name.*[k] (2d.) In respect of dependence. We resign ourselves to God, to be portioned and made happy by him. When we swear allegiance to him, we do withal put ourselves under his protection, and profess our expectation of all good from him. Baptism fixeth our eyes upon him, *as the eyes of a servant upon the hand of his master*,[l] not only for work, but for wages. This is *to yield ourselves to the Lord*,[m] to be made holy by him, and to be made happy by him. And it is no more than we are already obliged to, by manifold ties: only in this ordinance, we do more explicitly signify our consent to that, which we were bound to before; and to all the other ties, add an obligation of our own.

Now in the form of baptism, all the persons of the blessed Trinity are named; no doubt, (1st.) To confirm the doctrine of the Trinity; which, without controversy, is one of the greatest *mysteries of godliness;* and, (2nd.) To clear the duty; or that we might the better see, and be affected with, our obligations to these sacred persons; and might from thence take direction, both what to do, and what to expect.

1. We are baptized *in* (or *into*) the name of the Father. That is, thereby is sealed our dedication to God the Father; professing to believe that there is a God, and to consent to take him for our God. *It is avouching the Lord to be our God.*[n] And the consent of the will must be guided by the assent of the understanding. We take God to be that to us which he is, and declare our consent to those moral relations, in which he is pleased to stand to us. Now, that which in the creed we profess to believe, in an especial manner, concerning God the Father, is, that he is the Creator: this then must, in baptism, be applied and acknowledged concerning ourselves; he is my Creator. We give up ourselves to him as Creator, in all those relations which result from creation. More particularly, we give up ourselves to God our Creator,

(1.) As our absolute owner and Lord; to dispose of us by an absolute sovereignty, and to actuate us by an infinite power, (Psal. ciii. 3.) *He made us, and not we ourselves*, or, as it is in Hebrew margin, *and his we are:* put them both together and they complete the argument; because he made us, and not we ourselves, therefore we are not our own, but his. There cannot be imagined any sovereignty so despotic, or any property so absolute, as that which ariseth from creation. He who gave us our being, without any concurrence of ours, may justly call us his own; and may he not do what he will with his own? That little which our parents contributed to our being, only as instruments, produceth so great a power, property, and interest, that the law of nations makes children not to be *(sui juris)* at their own command: much more is God our owner, who is the fountain of our being. Now in baptism we seal our consent to this, and resign ourselves to him, so as no longer to be *our own.*[o] We receive his mark, his image and superscription, and thereby acknowledge him our Owner.

(2.) As our supreme Governor: morally to rule us, as intellectual free agents, by his revealed law; directing us in, and binding us to, that duty, which as creatures we owe him. We hereby consent, that the Lord should be *our lawgiver and our judge;*[p]

h Isa. xliv. 5. k Isa. xxvi. 13. l 1 Cor. xii. 13. l Ps. cxxiii. 2. m 2 Chron. xxx. 8. n Deut. xxvi. 17. o 1 Cor. vi. 20. p Isa. xxxiii. 22.

agreeing to it as fit, that he who gave *being*, should give *law*. The language of our baptismal engagement is, *Thou art my King, O God!*[q] It is a self-surrender to the commanding power of his revealed will.

(3.) As our chief good. He who made us, is alone able to give perfection to his work, by making us truly happy. This hath special regard to the darling attribute of God, his goodness; the source of all that good, which can satisfy the soul's desire. As in baptism we own God for our ruler, so we own him likewise for our benefactor. Christ, speaking of earthly princes, saith, *They that exercise authority are called benefactors:* (Luke xxii. 25.) and they were wont to pride themselves much in the number, compliments, and attendance of their clients, and beneficiaries. Now, to be the Lord's, is to own him for our benefactor, and attend upon him accordingly. *Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee,*[r] is the meaning of our baptismal covenant.

(4.) As our highest and ultimate end. The name of God is often put for his honour and glory, so that being baptized into the name of the Father, seals our engagement to direct all our actions to his glory. This follows upon our regard to God the Father as Creator; for if he is the first cause he must be the last end. If all things are *of him*, by way of creation, and *through him*,[s] by way of providential influence, all things must be *to him*, in their final tendency and result. In heaven God is, and will be, *all in all*;[t] and what is heaven upon earth, but making him our *all in all?* Now, the consideration of this should engage us to holiness: we are not our own, and therefore may not live as we please: we are God's, and therefore must glorify him, both with our bodies and with our spirits. It may likewise serve for our comfort. When any thing troubles us, there is great satisfaction in this, that we are the Lord's. David pleads it in prayer, (Ps. cxix. 94.) *I am thine, save me.* If we are indeed his, no doubt he will look after his own.

2. We are baptized *in* (or *into*) the name of the Son.

This seems to have a peculiar emphasis in this administration: and therefore, though the other two are always implied, yet we find this most generally expressed in the New Testament; (see Acts viii. 16; xix. 5. Rom. vi. 3. Gal. iii. 27.) for into his hands the mediatorial kingdom is in an especial manner put. It is to him, that the name is given above every name, and all judgment is committed. Our religion is called, the religion of Christ; the Christian religion. The disciples are from him called *Christians*, Acts xi. 26. *From him, the whole family, both in heaven and earth, is named*, Eph. iii. 15. And therefore baptism, the ordinance of admission into that family, of initiation into that religion, is fitly said to be, into the name of Christ. As those who were initiated into the Mosaic dispensation, are said to have been baptized into Moses, (i. e. given up to God's conduct by the ministry of Moses,) so we are baptized into Christ, i. e. given up to God in Christ Jesus. That is the grand characteristical mark of the Christian religion, of which baptism is the initiating ordinance. The Jews acknowledged God the Father; and they were more agreed concerning *the spirit of the Messiah*, than concerning the *person of the Messiah;* and therefore it was requisite that this should be mainly insisted upon.

Our being baptized into the name of Jesus, doth ratify and seal two things:

(1.) Our *assent* to the truth of all divine revelations concerning him. Baptism is the badge of our profession of the truth *as it is in Jesus;* not only from Christ, as the spring and author, but concerning Christ, as the subject matter. In baptism, we set to our seal that God is true in what he hath made known to us concerning him; namely,

That Christ was, and is, the eternal Son of God, *by a generation which none can declare.* This was the summary of the Eunuch's faith, upon which he was baptized, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, Acts viii. 37. A short creed, but the rock on which the church is built. That this Son of God in the fulness of time became man, was *made flesh*,[u] was born of a woman, and so became Emanuel, God with us. That this Jesus was the true Messiah; the Saviour of the world; sanctified and sent for this purpose by the Father; to whom all the prophets bore witness; and in whom the types and predictions of the Old Testament have their full accomplishment. That in pursuance of his undertaking to redeem and save us, after he had lived a holy, useful, and exemplary life, and preached a divine and heavenly doctrine, he suffered death upon the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, and so to bring in an everlasting righteousness. That after he had lain in the grave till the third day, he rose again from the dead by his own power; and having conversed forty days upon earth, and given many infallible proofs of his resurrection to those who were to preach it to the world, he ascended, in triumph, to heaven; and sat down at the right hand of God; where he ever lives, making intercession for us. That this glorified Jesus is head over all things to the church, i. e. its supreme and only Lawgiver and King. And lastly, That a day is coming, when he will appear in the clouds of heaven, to judge the world, and to render to every man according to his works.

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q Ps. xliv. 4. r Ps. lxxiii 25. s Rom xi. 36. t 1 Cor. xv. 28. u John i. 14.

This is a summary of the doctrine of Christ, which as Christians we are to believe, and of which our baptism signifies and seals the belief. And it is a sin, and a shame, that many who have been baptized, and are called Christians, know little of these things. They are certainly great things; and we should labour to understand them, and to be rooted and established in the belief of them, and to feel the power of them in our souls. By baptism we were *delivered into this form of doctrine,*[v] as into a mould, and should labour, *from our hearts, to obey it.* Children should betimes be trained in the knowledge of these things; and taught to prefer the superlative excellency of this knowledge of Christ Jesus above any other knowledge whatsoever.

(2.) Our *consent* to him in all his appointed offices. Faith is the act of the will, as well as of the understanding. This great doctrine, that *Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,*[w] is not only *a faithful saying,* to be assented to, but *worthy of all acceptation,* to be embraced with the greatest affection. Peter said, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God:* (and considering Christ's present state of humiliation, which was a veil to his glory, it was a very great word:) there is the *assenting* act of faith. Thomas said, *My Lord and my God:* (and it was the triumph of his faith over a prevailing unbelief:) there is the *consenting* act of faith. It is not enough to believe that Christ is *Lord, and God,* but we must take him to be our *Lord, and our God.* More particularly, in baptism we are sealed, and delivered up to Christ,

[1.] As our *Prophet,* to teach and instruct us.

He is the *great Prophet* who was promised to the fathers, (Deut. xviii. 15.) and in the fulness of time *he came from God, a teacher.*[x] He taught a while, in person, and he still teacheth by his word and Spirit; hath (if I may so speak) set up a great school, and he calls upon all *to learn of him.* By baptism we are entered into that school. And (by the way) if parents commonly enter their little children, at what school they please, before they are able to choose for themselves, why may they not enter them into Christ's school; who is the teacher of hearts, and can instil his instructions into the soul, earlier than we are aware of? Christ teacheth the Στοιχεια—*the rudiments;* (Heb. v. 12.) and those who say that he will not teach little ones, reproach our Master, as if he were the worse for going to heaven; for on earth he invited *little children* to him.[y]

Baptism draws us off from all other teachers who stand in opposition to Christ, or in competition with him. Carnal reason, and corrupt understanding, governed by the dictates of a perverse rebellious will, and unsanctified affections, must be disclaimed. Instructions must not be taken from the evil examples of the world, and the prevailing customs of the times. These teachers must be renounced. On the contrary, baptism devotes us to the teaching of Jesus Christ: one who is able to teach us, and as willing as he is able. It placeth us at *wisdom's gates;* sets us at *the feet of Christ,* there *to receive his word.* And it is the fittest place for us. As baptized Christians, we are the disciples, i. e. the scholars, of Christ. *We call him Master, and we say well, for so he is.*[z] The proper faculty of the soul, resigned to Christ as our prophet, is the understanding; which must be submitted to the commanding truth of all divine revelations, how mysterious soever.[a] Christ is a master, whose dictates are to be received with implicit faith, without dispute. How happy were it, could we live under the power of this engagement, or behave as Christ's scholars; observant of our Master, attentive to his instructions, affectionate to our school-fellows, concerned for the credit of our school, and still following on to know the Lord.

[2.] As our Priest, to atone for us and to save us. He is a Priest for ever, and *such an High Priest as became us.*[b] Were we but better acquainted with the mysteries of Christ's priestly office, we should see, and seeing admire, the singular propriety and beauty of it. Baptism is our subscription to the mediatorship of the Lord Jesus; it seals our approbation of, and consent to, those methods, which infinite wisdom hath taken to redeem a guilty world by a crucified Saviour. In this ordinance then, we are resigned and given up to Christ,

(1.) As a Mediator of reconciliation: quitting our confidence in any righteousness of our own, for the satisfaction of divine justice; and enrolling ourselves among the ransomed of the Lord, who profess to owe all their comforts, and all their hopes, to the blood of Jesus, and to receive all, as flowing to them in that stream. In baptism *we receive the atonement,* (Rom. v. 11.) and it is a rich receiving; which makes us unspeakably happy, and without which we should be eternally miserable. (2.) As a Mediator of intercession; renouncing other intercessors, and relying on Christ, as our only Advocate with the Father, who *appears for us,* and pleads for us. We have a cause to be tried, and baptism admits us as Christ's clients, and interests us in his skill and faithfulness, in the management of that great affair.

We thereby also engage to put all our services into his hands, to be perfumed with the incense of his own intercession, and so presented to the Father. In baptism, our names are engraved upon the breastplate of this great High Priest, *who, as the forerunner, is for us entered.* On this the apostle builds his

v Rom. vi. 17. w 1 Tim. i. 15. x John iii. 2. y Matt xix. 14.

z John xiii. 13. a Oportet discentem credere. b Heb vii. 26.

assurance of the ability of Christ to save unto the uttermost, that *he ever lives to make intercession*, Heb. vii. 25. And what a source of comfort is this, to all those who sincerely abide by their baptismal covenant, that Christ himself is, and will be, their High Priest; so that all the privileges, which flow from his atonement and intercession, are theirs!

[3.] As our *King*, to rule us. *He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour*, Acts v. 31. *A Priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace is between them both.*[b] Baptism is an oath of allegiance to Christ, as our Saviour Prince. The children of professing parents are born within this allegiance, (as our law expresses it,) and are therefore to be baptized, as Christ's free-born subjects, and in ratification of their engagements.

(1.) In baptism we are put under the *power* of Christ's government; oblige ourselves to bear faith and true allegiance to King Jesus, and cordially to adhere to the authority and interests of his kingdom; renouncing all other rule and dominion, and engaging religiously to observe all his laws and injunctions, how contrary soever to our own corrupt wills and affections. In baptism we take the yoke of Christ upon us, and profess ourselves *willing*, not only in the day of his *grace*, to be made *happy* by him, but in the *day of his power*,[c] to be made holy by him. This is to kiss the Son, as it is expressed, Ps. ii. 12. as an expression of cordial and affectionate allegiance. (2.) In baptism we are put under the *protection* of Christ's government. Where we pay allegiance we expect protection; and shall not here be disappointed, for if the *Lord* be *our Judge, our Lawgiver, and our King, he will save us*, Isa. xxxiii. 22. Christ's subjects may and must depend upon his love and care, as their guard and defence against the enemies of their souls. In baptism we come under his wings; quitting dependence upon the creature, as a false, deceitful shelter. We *appoint to ourselves one head*, as the prophet speaks, (Hos. i. 11.) i. e. own and submit to his headship.

Thus stands the covenant relation between Christ and believers, of which baptism is a seal; which is in short thus; *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*[d] Christ doth, in this ordinance, seriously make over himself to us to be ours, on condition we are sincerely his; which we therein profess and oblige ourselves to be.

3. We are baptized *in* (or *into*) *the name of the Holy Ghost*; the third person in the blessed Trinity.

When those Ephesians, mentioned Acts xix. 2, 3. confessed, that they had not so much as heard whether there were an Holy Ghost, it was asked with wonder, *Unto what then were ye baptized?* implying, that the believing, consenting acknowledgment of the Holy Ghost is essential to Christian baptism. For herein, as well as in the former particulars, are required, both our *assent* and our *consent*.

(1.) Our *assent* to the truth of the Scripture revelation concerning the Holy Ghost. Particularly,

[1.] Concerning the divinity of the Holy Ghost, which is more than intimated in this institution; and, [2.] Concerning his agency, in carrying on the work of our redemption, and completing the undertaking of Christ. That it is the Holy Spirit who indited the Scriptures, which are both the seed and the food of the new creature; so that all the benefits which flow to the church in general, and to believers in particular, from the word, (and these are neither few nor small,) come originally from the Holy Ghost. And, who works grace, and carries on that work, in the souls of believers; in a free manner, as the wind bloweth where it listeth, yet according to the election of grace. Of this, in baptism we declare our belief, in opposition to those proud opinions, which by making self all in all, make nothing at all, or next to nothing, of the Spirit. This is a truth perhaps as little thought of as any part of the baptismal profession, though as material as any.

(2.) Our *consent* to stand in a covenant relation to the Holy Ghost:

[1.] As our Sanctifier: to change our nature, conquer our corruptions, quicken our graces, and make us meet to partake of the inheritance of the saints in light. By baptism we engage to submit to his sanctifying influences and operations, and give up ourselves to him, to be wrought up by him into a meetness for glory. We promise not to quench but to encourage, not to resist but to comply with, his workings; and for this purpose to attend upon those ordinances, which are instituted as means of sanctification, and by which the Spirit ordinarily works: desiring, and designing, to be sanctified by them, and waiting upon the Spirit for success.

[2.] As our Teacher. The Spirit is given to teach doctrines to be known and believed, and duties to be known and practised; and our baptismal covenant engageth us to receive, and submit to, these teachings. To receive with meekness (the meekness of the understanding, and the meekness of the will) that which the Spirit gives in to us. To welcome his remembrances and admonitions; and to receive the teachings of his word, not only in the *light* of them into our heads, but in the *love* of them into our hearts.

[3.] As our Guide: to show us the way in which we should go, and to lead us in it. It is the character of all the children of God, that they are led by the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 14. By baptism, we yield up ourselves to that conduct, with David's prayer, *Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.*[e] The Spirit guides, out of the way of wick-

[b] Zech. vi. 13. [c] Psalm cx. 3.

[d] Cant. ii. 16. [e] Psalm cxliii. 10.

edness, the paths of the destroyer, into the way everlasting: and by baptism we are obliged to follow, humbly, closely, cheerfully, and fully. To walk, not after the flesh, as other Gentiles walk, but after the spirit, is what all are obliged to, who are in Christ Jesus.

[4.] As our Comforter. He is promised as such, John xiv. 16. (Παρακλητος,) either our *Advocate* and *Intercessor* within us; and as such by baptism we become his clients, and oblige ourselves to take his advice, and trust to his management: or our *Comforter*; and as such we receive him; depending upon him for that solid, satisfying comfort, which we have foolishly sought, and may despair ever to find, in the creature. Whatever disquiets us, we are engaged by our baptism to wait upon the Spirit for our comfort, in his own way.

In a word, our Lord Jesus, in this ordinance, doth in effect say to us, as he did to the disciples when he breathed on them, (John xx. 22.) *Receive ye the Holy Ghost.* And our restipulation is something like the blessed Virgin's submission to the power of the Spirit, (Luke i. 38.) *Behold the servant of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.*

And thus I have endeavoured to open the nature of this ordinance; the meaning of this service. And may we not from hence fetch matter of lamentation, that of the many who are baptized, and the many who bring their children to be baptized, there are so few who rightly understand what they do, or what was done to them? And if this be the nature of baptism, however to a carnal eye it may seem a mean thing, yet it is truly great. That which puts a value upon the wax and the seal, is the worth of the inheritance thereby conveyed. Baptism cannot be a little thing, when it is into names so great, as those *of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

HAVING opened at large the nature of baptism, we come next to inquire, to whom it is to be administered? And we may take some general rules in answer to this question, from what hath already been said, in opening the nature and institution of the ordinance. Our Master hath directed to baptize all nations; which easily affords this undisputed rule, that difference of nation makes no difference in Christianity. Greek or Jew, Barbarian or Scythian, people of all nations, are alike welcome to Christ upon gospel terms.

In a protestant nation, little needs be said to expose the folly of the church of Rome, in administering the ordinance of baptism to things senseless and inanimate; as bells, and oars, and the like. When the apostles are bid to preach the gospel to *every creature*, it must be restrained to human creatures; the chief of the visible creation.

1. Baptism, we have found, is an ordinance of Christ's mediatorial kingdom; therefore all who pertain to that kingdom are to be baptized. It is a part of our *magna charta*, which every subject may claim the benefit of, and plead an interest in, unless by any forfeiture he deprive himself of the privilege of it. It belongs not to the internal, but external, administration of this kingdom; is an ordinance of the visible church, and pertains therefore to these who are visible members of the church.

2. Baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace; and therefore belongs to those who are in that covenant, (at least by profession,) and to none other. As for a real and saving covenant interest, we cannot judge of it; it is a secret not belonging to us. In the external administration, we must proceed by a judgment of charity, upon a plausible profession. And according to these rules,

FIRST. All those who seriously profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are to be baptized.

Be they heathens, *who have not known God*, or Jews or Turks, *who have not obeyed the gospel of Christ*, if they will renounce their delusions, and willingly and deliberately embrace the Christian religion, they are welcome to this ordinance. I say willingly embrace Christianity, for it is a vile abuse of the ordinance, and a contradiction to the constitution of Christ's kingdom, to force people to baptism, and by it to Christianity, by outward violence and compulsion. This was the method the Spaniards took in converting the Indians, of which they boast so much. Christ will have all his subjects *willing in the day of his power.*

This required profession supposeth a competency of knowledge; and consists in a declared consent to the terms of the covenant; in which the judgment can be made only by the outward appearance. The believing consent is in the heart, and that falls not under our cognizance; it is *with the mouth that confession is made unto salvation.*[a] In the primitive times, when Christianity was to be planted in a world made up of Jews and heathens, this profession was previously required; though it appears not in what degree of explicitness. Whether every individual of the three thousand baptized, Acts ii. 41. did make a particular confession of his faith, or whether their cheerful submission to the ordinance, upon a public declaration of the nature and obligations of it, sufficed, as an implicit consent, is uncer-

[a] Romans x. 10.

tain. The Eunuch's confession (Acts viii. 37.) was short, *that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*, which was then *the present truth*. And perhaps Christianity has gained little, by the lengthening and multiplying of creeds; which, it may justly be feared, have caused more contention than they have cured.

SECOND. The infants of those who are in covenant with God, and are themselves members of the visible church, are likewise to be baptized.

As far as the records of the New Testament go, most were baptized upon the former title: and good reason for it; the Christian church was then in the planting. And hence ariseth a mistake, like that of supposing that because, upon the first conquest of a kingdom, an actual consent to the prince's sovereignty, by taking the oaths of allegiance, is justly required, as the condition of partaking of the privilege of his protection, therefore it must needs be so, after the government is settled; and that none were to be reckoned his subjects, but those who testified this explicit consent; whereas it is agreed, by the law of all nations, that those who are born of the king's subjects, and in the king's dominions, are within the allegiance of the king, and entitled to the privileges of his subjects.

And here, I profess, I enter upon a very unpleasant part of my province, (for I take no delight in opposing,) but there is no avoiding it; the truth once delivered to the saints, and entailed on them, and their seed, must be contended for. But because the ground is rough, I promise to tread lightly, and to hasten over it as fast as I can: and the rather, because so much has been said and written, by so many learned and able divines, in defence of infant baptism, which yet remains unanswered, that to be large upon the subject, would be but *(actum agere)* waste labour. I am asking for the *good old way*, and do not covet new lights.

The people we have occasion to contradict in handling this question, rather assumingly call themselves Baptists, as if there was no baptism, and therefore no Christianity, but amongst them. Call them Antipedobaptists, i. e. such as are against infant baptism; or Anabaptists, i. e. rebaptizers, such as require those who were baptized in infancy to be baptized again; and you call them right.

And as to the persons of this people, I presume not to judge them; yea, I do not doubt that many among them are such as fear God, and are accepted of him. What I myself have seen of Christ among them, I do dearly love and rejoice in; and those who only scruple the baptizing of their own children, but do not condemn infant baptism in general as a nullity, and reproach it as a vanity, though I heartily pity their mistake, I would be very backward to censure them: acknowledging, with Mr. Flavel, that there are difficulties in this controversy, which may puzzle the minds of well-meaning Christians. But for their way, I must here declare my utter dislike of it: and the rather, because in that short experience I have had of the world, I have observed these things concerning it:

1. That it is a very uncharitable way. For whatever *they do*, I am sure their *tenets do* unchurch and unchristian more than nineteen parts in twenty of the Christian world; and thus dishonour Christ by narrowing his kingdom.

2. That it is a very unnatural way: cutting children off from being parts of their parents; and prohibiting those to partake of their parents' privileges, who unhappily partake of their corruptions. And,

3. That it is generally accompanied with (and therefore probably leads to) other errors. For, not to go so far as Germany, and reflect upon the anabaptists of Munster, it is too plain, that the greater part of the anabaptists of England, at this day, run into extremes directly opposite to each other, and equally distant from the truth as it is in Jesus. And, by the way, methinks those who speak so much of free grace, and the unconditionality of the gospel-covenant, should be easily induced to honour free grace by the admission of children under its wings, though incapable of conditioning.

As to the points in question, I shall endeavour with all clearness and brevity to show,

I. What children are to be baptized.

II. What gives them their right to baptism: and,

III. What proof we have of that right.

I. As to the first of these, or what children are to be baptized? I answer,

Not all children promiscuously. If both the parents are out of the visible church, the child is not to be baptized, till it comes to years of understanding: Yet

The children of parents, only one of whom professeth faith in Christ and obedience to him, have a right to baptism; the *unbelieving parent* is so far *sanctified by the believing, that the children are* federally *holy*, 1 Cor. vii. 14.

Yea, though the parents are not actual members of any particular church, yet, as members of the universal visible church, their serious profession of faith entitles their children to baptism; for (as was showed before) baptism seals our admission, not into any particular, but into the universal, church.

But in case the parents are excommunicated, it seems to me that the children's right is thereby, for the present, suspended; supposing that excommunication to be just.

If both the parents are openly profane and scandalous, so that whatever profession they make, their practice doth notoriously give the lie to it; this amounts to the case of those who are excommunicated. Since such cast out themselves, and it is but a mockery to call them Christians, till they re-

pent, and resolve to amend; and it doth but harden them in their wickedness, to take their children into the church. Or finally,

If the parents deny the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, or refuse to consent to the covenant of grace, their children are not to be baptized. Those who do not hold the head, have not any title to membership, either for themselves or theirs. In a word, whatever, upon the first disciplining of nations, would have been a bar to a man's own baptism, in the continuation of Christianity, may justly be deemed a bar to the baptism of his children; and nothing else. As to the

II. Or what it is that gives children a right to baptism, (I mean as the requisite condition of their baptism,) I answer, the visible church-membership of one, or both, of their parents; i. e. their profession, of faith in Christ, and obedience to him.

It is not the profession or promise of any other person or persons for them, which can entitle children to baptism, except in some extraordinary cases. And therefore I think, to that great question, *Why are children baptized, when, by reason of their tender age, they cannot perform the conditions of the covenant?* the common answer, *Because they promise them by their sureties*, is not at all satisfactory: for unless there be some relation, natural or instituted, between them and their sureties, I see not how the consent of the sureties can either bind or benefit them. And I fear that building the fabric of infant baptism upon so weak a foundation, and erecting a fort so untenable against the adversaries of it, hath given them great advantage. By this reasoning, the infants of Jews, Turks, or Pagans, might be baptized, upon the profession of any Christian, though standing in no relation to them; which certainly has no foundation in the word of God. I deny not the antiquity, nor in some cases the expediency, of sponsors. In the primitive times, when temptations to apostasy from the Christian faith were frequent and strong, sureties were generally required; i. e. persons of reputation in the church, who did (1st) testify that they believed the sincerity of the parents' profession; and that, so far as they were able to judge, they were not likely to apostatize; and (2d) engage that in case the parents should die, or apostatize, they would themselves take care of the Christian education of the child. But this custom, laudable enough in its rise, hath sadly degenerated in its continuance; and the children's right to baptism been built so much upon their susception by sponsors, that the parents have been excluded by a law from professing and promising for their own offspring; which doubtless is a great abuse. If the sureties come in only as witnesses, why are they dealt with as the prime agents? If they are looked upon as proprietors of, and undertaking for, the children immediately, I see no ground in Scripture for such a susception, and therefore know not how it can be done in faith. And it is not only depriving parents of their right of dedicating their own children, but it looks too much like releasing them from their obligations to educate them, when the whole care of them is so committed to others: and it is a temptation to neglect their education; while the sureties are bound to take care of that, which they have no opportunity for, and which they are not induced to, by any natural affection. If it be said that they are the parents' deputies, (the best which can be made of it,) then certainly there should be some word or action appointed, which might, at least, imply such a deputation; and the parents should be permitted, some way or other, to signify their assent and consent to the engagement of the sureties; whereas the canon expressly provides, *that the parents be not urged to be present:* or the sureties should make some mention of the parents; and their transacting not be expressly said to be *in the name of the child.* At least it should be left to the parent's choice, whether he will make a deputy or not; whereas, on the contrary, the canon enjoins, that *no parent be admitted to answer as godfather for his own child.*

Having thus taken infant baptism off the wrong foundation, we fix it upon the right, i. e. the parents' profession of faith in Christ, and obedience to him. A plausible profession, not contradicted by evident ignorance, or wickedness.

In case of the death, or necessary absence, of the parents, it sufficeth, that this profession be credibly attested by witnesses, knowing the parents, and known to the church: (if the minister and congregation be not otherwise satisfied:) and in such a case of necessity, it is very requisite that some person related to the child, or to whom the care of it is committed, should undertake for its Christian education. But if the parents (one or both) be living, it is proper that they should make an express declaration of their belief of the gospel, their consent to the covenant of grace, and their desire to have the child brought into that covenant. This fixes the title upon the right ground, and obligeth those who are most fit to be obliged. This parents most certainly are; because,

(1.) They have the greatest interest in their children. Who so fit to have the disposition of any thing, as the right owner? When the sponsors present a child to God, they give what is not their own —and what thanks have they?

(2.) Parents have also the greatest power over their children: a power, during infancy, *to choose and to refuse*, Numb. xxx. 3—5. When the sponsors transact in the child's name, they would do well to consider, *by what authority they do these things, and who gave them that authority.* And,

Finally, The covenant is, and ever hath been, externally administered to infants in the right of their

parents. *A God to thee, and to thy seed after thee,* (Gen. xvii. 7.) not to thee, and to the seed of a stranger, whom thou canst but pick up, and circumcise, and turn home again. A true domestic owner of a child, who hath power to choose or refuse for him, may perhaps also be admitted to bring that child to baptism; because his interest in, and power over, such a child, is nearly tantamount to that of a parent. As Abraham circumcised all who were born in his house, and bought with his money, Gen. xvii. 13, 28. We proceed now,

III. To prove the right of the infant seed of believing parents to baptism.

And here, to make some amends for the unpleasantness of disputing, it is no small pleasure to be the infants' advocate; to plead for those who cannot plead for themselves. Our law favours infants, and so doth our gospel.

For clearing what follows, some things are needful to be premised: as,

1. That consequences from Scripture are good proofs. The Scriptures were written for rational creatures. And is not Scripture reasoning the sense and meaning of Scripture? If the premises are plain Scripture truths, and granted, they are unworthy to be disputed with who deny the conclusion.

2. That all truths are not alike plain in Scripture. Some things are spoken of more fully, others more sparingly. The Scriptures were written for those who have them, and therefore they speak sparingly of the state of heathens, who have them not. They were written for those who are of ability to use them, and therefore speak sparingly of the state of infants, who are not yet of that ability. And the New Testament speaks less of those things which are more fully spoken of in the Old Testament; and which therefore were well known when the New was written. And infant baptism was not then controverted; for the Jews, to whom the gospel was first sent, understood it well enough.

3. That though the point of infant baptism may seem not so great a point to be contended for, yet the grounds on which it stands, and which they strike at who deny it, are very considerable, and of great moment.

These things premised, I shall mention just a few of the arguments.

ARGUMENT I. The infants of believing parents are in covenant with God, and therefore have a right to the initiating seal of that covenant.

When I say they are in covenant, understand me of the external administration of the covenant of grace, not of that which is internal. To the Jews pertained *the covenant and the promises,*[b] and yet with many of them God was not well pleased. Baptism, as was showed before, belongs to the external administration. What I mean is this; the promises of the covenant are conditionally sealed to them, viz. if, as they become capable, they agree to the terms to which they are by their baptism obliged. And what more can be said of the baptism of adults' for the seal of the internal administration to true believers, is *the spirit of promise.*[c]

The *consequent* of this argument is seldom denied, viz. that if infants are in covenant, they have a right to the seal. If the crown devolves upon an infant, he hath a right to the ceremony of coronation: and who can forbid water to those who are in the Christian covenant? Yet it doth not therefore follow, that these infants have a right to the Lord's supper: because in the two sacraments, though the thing signified be the same, the manner of signification is different. The Lord's supper is an ordinance in which the partaker must be active, but in baptism purely passive, (which therefore is still, and in our language, spoken of in the passive voice,) as if designed, purposely, for the benefit of infants. Under the Old Testament, infants did partake of circumcision, but not of the passover.

The *antecedent*, therefore, is that which especially requires proof, viz. that the children of professing parents are in covenant with God, i. e. come under the external administration of the covenant of grace. And I prove it by four steps;

1. It is possible that they may be in covenant.
2. It is probable that they should be in covenant.
3. It is certain that they were in covenant.
4. It is therefore certain that they are in covenant.

1. It is very possible that they may be in covenant with God.

I see no contradiction in the thing itself. The great objection insisted upon is, that they cannot restipulate, or declare their consent to the covenant: as if God's thoughts and ways of mercy were not infinitely above ours; or as if divine grace, which acts by prerogative, could not covenant with those who are not yet able to express their consent. If God made a covenant with the earth, (Gen. ix. 13.) and instituted a seal of that covenant, surely infants may be *fœderati*, though incapable of being *fœderantes*; i. e. may be happily *taken into covenant*, though not *covenanters*.

A right understanding of the nature of the covenant would clear this: viz. that God is the principal agent, and works in us that which he requires of us. *I will put my laws in their hearts*, so runs the covenant, Heb. viii. 10. Hence it is called διαθηκη, which signifies as well a *testament* as a *covenant*: and if it be disputed, whether it be possible that infants should be taken into covenant, yet I hope it is

[b] Rom. ix. 4.

[c] Eph. i. 13.

past dispute, that they may have benefit by a testament.

To me it is very clear, that infants are capable of covenant relations, and of receiving and enjoying covenant privileges and benefits; not only the external, but the internal. Hence we not only read of those who were sanctified from the womb, but are assured, that John the Baptist *was filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb*, Luke i. 15. And indeed, if children are capable of corruption, it would be very hard upon them to say, that they are incapable of satisfaction. That would be to give the first Adam a larger power to kill, than the second Adam hath to quicken. In a word, none deny the possibility of the salvation of infants, and if it is possible that they may be saved, I am sure it is possible that they may be in covenant with God.

2. It is highly probable that they should be in covenant with God: for,

(1.) Infants are parts of their parents. The very law of nature accounts them so during their infancy, as appears by the concurring law of nations. Hence they are said to be *in the loins of their parents*, (Heb. vii. 10.) and in them to act and receive. The propriety of parents in their children is greater than in any thing else. Now, in the day when we give up ourselves to the Lord, we lay all that we have at his feet; and pass over all our rights and interests to him; and our children among the rest. God therefore takes it as a notorious invasion of his prerogative, that his people should devote their children to another god; *Thou hast taken thy sons, and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, to cause them to pass through the fire*, Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.

(2.) All God's other covenants, which he hath made with men, have taken in the seed of the covenanters; which makes it highly probable, that the covenant of grace should be so ordered. The covenant of works was made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; for we all feel the sad effects of his transgression. The covenant which God made with Noah, was made with him and his seed after him, (Gen. ix. 9.) of which we have still the comfortable experience. And the covenant of grace is paralleled with that covenant, Isa. liv. 9.

The covenant of peculiarity made with Israel took in their seed; and therefore, at the solemnity of entering into this covenant, express mention is made of the admission of their *little ones*, Deut. xxix. 11—13. Though they were not capable of actual covenanting, yet they came in the right of their parents. And that covenant, though (taken strictly) no part of the covenant of grace, yet was a remarkable type of it.*

The covenant of priesthood made with Phinehas, and the covenant of royalty made with David, included their seed: and Christians are kings and priests unto God.

(3.) The God of heaven hath, upon all occasions, expressed a particular kindness for little children. Nineveh was spared out of regard to the little children it contained: and we scarcely find, in all the gospel history, such an instance of the tender affection of the Lord Jesus, as in his reception of the *little ones* who were brought to him; whom he *took up in his arms, and blessed*, Mark x. 13, 14.

3. It is certain that they were in covenant.

They were reckoned among those, *to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the promises.*[d] It doth not very evidently appear in Scripture records, how the covenant was administered in the first ages of the world; but *then* it was administered to families. Family religion was then the face of religion: which puts it beyond reasonable doubt, that children were within the covenant. It is observable, that, in the patriarchal ages, professors were called *sons of God*, (Gen. vi. 2.) supposed to be the posterity of Seth as such. The profession of religion was *then* entailed upon families: a manifest indication of the covenant right of children, and of the designed method of the administration of the covenant, by propagating a profession.

The first clear manifestation of the covenant of grace, is in the transactions between God and Abraham, (Gen. xvii.) and it is very plain, that there the seed of the covenanter was taken into covenant. So it runs, (*v.* 7, &c.) *thee, and thy seed after thee;* and it is repeated with an observable emphasis, *a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.* To thy seed after thee, for thy sake; as appears, (Deut. iv. 37.) *because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them.* Upon Abraham's believing consent to the covenant, all his posterity was graciously admitted into the bonds of the covenant. Ishmael was therefore immediately circumcised as a child of Abraham; and Isaac afterwards: and so all the seed of Abraham according to the flesh, *to whom pertained the adoption*, was circumcised, as the seal of that adoption, and that covenant.

That the covenant with Abraham (Gen. xvii.) was not a covenant of works, the same with that made with Adam in innocency, is too evident to require

* The Israelites, throughout their generations, were undoubtedly under the *Abrahamic*, as well as the *Mosaic*, covenant; the former not having been disannulled by the latter, Gal. iii. 17. And indeed, on the former, all those hopes, which in fact obtained amongst pious Israelites in after-ages, of the pardon of presumptuous sins on repentance, and of happiness beyond death, must have been founded; since for neither of these did the Sinai covenant make any provision. And the last verse of the passage quoted above from Deut. xxix. plainly intimates, or rather asserts, that the covenant there referred to, and into which *little ones* were admitted, was the Abrahamic as well as the Mosaic. See Towgood's Baptism of Infants a reasonable Service, Intr. p. 5.

d Rom. ix. 4.

proof; and that it was not the covenant of peculiarity, but a pure gospel covenant of grace, will appear, if we consider,

(1.) That the grand article of this covenant is that which comprehends the whole covenant of grace, and all the riches of that covenant, viz. that *God will be a God to us*; which doth eminently include all happiness. What can a soul need, or desire more, than a special interest in God? Even the glory and happiness of heaven itself, (which is certainly conveyed by no other covenant than the covenant of grace,) is thus set forth, (Rev. xxi. 3.) *The Lord himself shall be their God.*

(2.) That circumcision, the seal of this covenant, is said to be *the seal of the righteousness which is by faith*, (Rom. iv. 11.) which must necessarily be by the covenant of grace.

(3.) That the blessing, of which the Gentiles are made partakers, by being brought into the covenant of grace, is called *the blessing of Abraham*, (Gal. iii. 14.) i. e. the blessing insured to Abraham and his seed. Those who deny infants to be in this covenant, deny them the blessing of Abraham; (for he had it to himself and his seed;) and so, as much as in them lies, cut them off from salvation: but it is well that the unbelief of man doth not make the righteousness of God of none effect.

(4.) That the covenant of grace, in the New-Testament revelation of it, is expressly distinguished, not from the covenant made with Abraham, (for it was the same with that,) but from the covenant which God made with Israel, *in the day when he took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt*, Heb. viii. 8—10. Now, that was the covenant of peculiarity; the Sinai covenant; which Sinai covenant is, in like manner, manifestly distinguished from the promise made to Abraham, which the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul, Gal. iii. 17. compared *v.* 8. Now, we build the covenant rights of infants upon the promise made to Abraham, the father of the faithful.

(5.) If the covenant with Abraham was only the covenant of peculiarity, and circumcision only a seal of the promise of the land of Canaan, how came it that all proselytes, of what nation soever, even *the strangers*, were to be circumcised; though not being of any of the tribes, they had no part or lot in the land of Canaan? The extending the seal of circumcision to proselyted strangers, and to their seed, was a plain indication, that the New-Testament administration of the covenant of grace would reach, not the covenanters only, but their seed. Now, baptism comes in the room of circumcision, as appears by comparing Col. ii. 11, 12. and whatever is objected against children's capacity, of being taken into covenant by baptism, doth very much reflect upon the wisdom of God, in taking them into the same covenant by circumcision.

From all this it appears, that the covenant with Abraham was a covenant of grace; and that the seed of believers were taken into that covenant: and therefore, that the children of professing parents were formerly in covenant with God. I am now to show,

4. That it is therefore certain that they are still in covenant.

This brings the argument home: and, I think, may be made out without much difficulty. For,

1. This follows from what has been said on the former head. If they *were* in covenant, unless evidence can be produced to prove their ejection, we ought to conclude, that they are still in covenant. Our opponents call upon us to prove, by express Scripture, that infants are in covenant: but certainly, having proved, even to demonstration, that they were in covenant, it lies upon them to show *where* and *when* they were thrown out of covenant, which they were never yet able to evince, no, not by the least footstep of a consequence. It is as clear as the sun at noon-day, that the seed of believers *had* a right to the initiating seal of the covenant; and how came they to lose that right?

For the clearing of this consequence, it is to be considered,

(1.) That the design of the New-Testament dispensation was to enlarge, and not to straiten, the manifestations of divine grace; to make the door wider, and not to make it narrower. But if the seed of believers who were taken into covenant, and had a right to the initiating seal under the Old Testament, are now turned out of covenant, and deprived of that right, the times of the law were more full of grace than the times of the gospel; which is absurd. Can it be imagined, that the Gentiles are, in respect of their children, in a worse state than they were under the law? *Then*, if a Gentile was proselyted, and taken into covenant, his seed was taken in with him; and is that privilege denied now? Is the seed of Abraham's faith in a worse condition than the seed of Abraham's flesh?

(2.) That there needed not any express declaration in the Scriptures concerning this. The not repealing a law, is enough to satisfy us of the continuance of it. It was said in the Old-Testament revelation of the covenant of grace, that God would be *a God to believers, and their seed. When* or *where* was this repealed? The gospel being made known to the Jews first, they knew well enough, by the tenor of the covenant with Abraham, that their children were to be taken in. What poor encouragement would it have been for a Jew to turn Christian, if his children, who before were in covenant, and were visible church members, must, upon the father's becoming a Christian, be *(ipso facto)* thrown out, and put to stand upon the same uncomfortable level, and at the same dismal distance from God, as the children

heathens and infidels! A tender father would ave said, "This is very hard, and not agreeable to at comfortable prospect which the prophets, in the ame of God, have so often given, of the days of the Messiah, the enlargement of the church, the *bring-g of the sons from far, and the daughters from the ds of the earth*, and the *owning of the offspring as a ed which the Lord hath blessed.*[a]

(3.) It is worth observing, that the gospel church s called the *Israel of God*, (Gal. vi. 16.) and the ospel covenant is said to be made with the *house f Israel, and the house of Judah*, (Heb. viii. 8.) nd those who had been *aliens from the commonwealth f Israel*, when effectually called to Christianity, re said to be *made nigh*, Eph. ii. 12, 13. All which ntimates, that the same privileges, for substance, which God's Israel had under the Old-Testament lispensation, do now pertain to the gospel church. Now one special privilege which the Old-Testament Israel had, was, that their infant seed was taken nto covenant with God: which privilege must cer-tainly remain to the New-Testament church, till there appears some evidence of its being cancelled. It is the apostle's inference from a long discourse, *We are Abraham's seed*, Gal. iii. 29.

2. There is not only no evidence in the New Testament, of the repealing and vacating of this privilege, but an abundant evidence of the confirmation and continuation of it, in that remarkable scripture so often pleaded for infant baptism, (Acts ii. 39.) *For the promise is to you, and to your children.* The Jews had brought the blood of Christ upon *themselves* and *their children:* Now, said they, what shall we do, who have thus entailed a curse upon our posterity? Why, repent, and ye shall have an entailed promise. Peter is there inviting and encouraging the converted Jews to repent, and, by baptism, to dedicate themselves to Christ Jesus, and so to come under the evangelical dispensation of the covenant of grace. The privileges of that covenant are said to be, remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; i. e. justification and sanctification; pardon of past sin, and grace to go and sin no more; which are the two principal and most inclusive promises of the new covenant. Now this promise is *to you, and to your children;* which doth as plainly take in the seed of the covenanters, as the covenant with Abraham did, *I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed.* And the Jews, no doubt, understood it so; such a hint being enough to them who were brought up in the knowledge of the promise made unto the fathers. It was as much as to say, "For your encouragement to come into covenant by baptism, know, that it runs still as it did, *to you, and to your children:* not only your own lives, but your children's too, shall be put into the lease; so that if they pay the rent, and do the service, they shall share the benefit of it."

3. I do not see how else to understand those scriptures which speak of the salvation of whole families, upon the believing of the masters of those families, but thus, that all their children are thereupon brought into covenant, unless they are of age to refuse, and do enter their dissent; if so, their blood be upon their own head; but if infants, though they be not of age to consent, yet not being of age to dissent, their parents covenanting for them shall be accepted as their act and deed.

*Lydia's heart was opened*, and *she was baptized and her household*, Acts xvi. 15. The promise of salvation made to the jailer was, that upon his believing, his *house* should be saved; (Acts xvi. 31.) *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ* (πιστευσον;) do thou believe, and *thou shalt be saved*, i. e. taken into a covenant of salvation, *and thy house:* which, I think, may be explained by what Christ said to Zaccheus upon his believing, (Luke xix. 9.) *This day is salvation come to this house;* i. e. the covenant is externally administered to the whole family; as appears by the following words, *forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham.* The coming of salvation to his house, is grounded upon his relation to Abraham, and consequently his interest in Abraham's covenant, *I will be a God to thee, and thy seed:* which Christ hereby intimates that he came to confirm and ratify, not to disannul. Apply this to Paul's words to the jailer, and the sense is plain; Believe in Christ, and salvation shall come to thy house: forasmuch as the believing jailer also is a son of Abraham. See Rom. iv. 11, 12, 16. It is further observable in this story of the jailer, that Paul and Silas preached to all that were in his house; (v. 32.) probably many of them not of his family; (perhaps the prisoners;) but the expression is altered, when the writer comes to speak of baptizing them, (v. 33.) where it is not said, that all in his house were baptized, but *he and all his;* his little ones, no doubt, for the sake of their relation to him; and that *straightway* upon his believing. What is added in the 34th verse, *he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house*, cannot be seriously objected to this, by any who can read, and will observe the original; which is, *he having believed in God, rejoiced in* (or *through*, or *with*) *his whole house.*[b] Though, if we allow *the believing* to be spoken of his whole house, it may only signify, that they were all by baptism enrolled amongst visible believers; and so infants are. And we read of the baptizing of whole families, besides those of Lydia and the jailer; and it is hard to imagine that there were no infants in any of them. It is more reasonable to suppose that there were, and that they were taken into covenant with their parents. By all this it is

[a] Isaiah lxi. 9.

[b] Ηγαλλιασατο πανοικι πεπιστευκως τω Θεω. He exulted, (so the Syriac,) and all the children of his house, in the faith of God.

evident, that the children of believing parents are in covenant with God, and have a right to baptism, the seal of that covenant.

It will not be amiss, before we proceed to another argument, briefly to inquire into the reasons, why God is pleased thus to take children into covenant with their parents? And, doubtless, he doth this,

(1.) To magnify the riches of his grace as diffusive of itself; conveyed, not as in a small vessel, the waters of which will soon be spent, but as in a full stream, which runs with continued supplies. The covenant of grace is a *river of pleasures.*[f] Grace is hereby glorified as free and preventing, i. e. *grace;* and here it appears, that the relation between us and God is founded, not on our choice, but his; *we love him, because he first loved us.*[g] In the providential kingdom, it is mentioned as an especial instance of the divine goodness, that God takes care of the young ones of his creatures, Ps. cxlvii. 9. So is his love manifested in the kingdom of grace. Taking children into covenant, is an encouraging instance of the goodness of his nature, and his swiftness to show mercy. David lays a peculiar emphasis upon this, in his admiring acknowledgments of God's goodness to him, (2 Sam. vii. 19.) *Thou hast spoken concerning thy servant's house, for a great while to come.* Kindness to the seed, for the parent's sake, is therefore called, *the kindness of God*, 2 Sam. ix. 3. When the covenant is so ordered, that the *seed* of the covenanters is thus *established for ever*, though *we* should fail in *singing the mercies of the Lord*, yet *the heavens themselves will praise his wonders*, Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4. compare *v.* 1, 5.

(2.) That the quickening influences of the second Adam may bear some analogy, in the method of communication, to the killing influences of the first Adam. There is a death propagated, and entailed upon our seed, by Adam's breach of the covenant of works; and therefore God would have some kind of life (though not a life of grace, yet a life of privilege) entailed upon our seed likewise, *by the bringing in of the better hope;* that so, within the visible church, the remedy might be as extensive as the disease. By native corruption, which we are all *born in*, sin is lodged in the heart; but by their native covenant right, which the seed of believers are all *born to*, the sin-offering is laid at the door. (I refer to one probable reading of Gen. iv. 7.)

(3.) That the hearts of true believers may hereby be comforted and encouraged in reference to their seed. It is a great inducement to come into this covenant, when it is thus entailed upon our children.

An estate, *in fee*, to a man and his heirs, is reckoned of more than twice the value of an estate for life. Though a man cannot be certain that his heir may not abuse or forfeit it, yet it is desirable to leave it to him. This indeed is, in a manner, the only sufficient ground that believers have to build their faith upon, in reference to the salvation of their children dying in infancy; which, to one who knows the worth of a soul, is no small thing.

(4.) *That he might seek a godly seed,*[h] (Hebr. *a seed of God,*) that his church might be built up in a seed of saints. Thus does God provide for a succession, by a timely taking hold of the rising generation, and marking them for his own, as born within the pale; that the promise may be made good to Christ, (Ps. lxxxix. 36.) *His seed shall endure for ever. A seed shall serve him, it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation.* It is in consideration of the deceitfulness of the human heart; (which if left at liberty, is very unapt to choose the good;) and to lead the young ones as they spring, by these early cords of love, into the bond of the covenant: that this previous inducement may help to turn the scale of the fluctuating, wavering soul, and so determine the choice on God's side; which would be much more hazarded if it were left wholly to an adult choice. Infant baptism is intended to pave the way to early piety. The profession of Christianity is a step towards the truth of it; and may prevail to introduce it; as a plea with God to give us his grace, and an argument with ourselves, to receive and submit to it. However, Christ is hereby honoured in the world, and *his name made great among the nations.* This is one of the fortifications of Christ's kingdom, by which it is secured from the gates of hell; and the design of the powers of darkness, to cut off the line of succession, and *wear out the saints*, is frustrated. Thus, in times of general corruption, doth God preserve a *tenth, which shall return, and shall be eaten*, even *the holy seed.*[i] During the prevalence of the papal kingdom in the western church, though infant baptism was quite misgrounded, and baptism itself almost lost, in the great corruptions which stained its purity, yet, the preserving of the ashes, gave rise to another phœnix. Thus, it is the will of God to preserve the invisible church in the visible, as wheat in the chaff; and as the power of godliness, at the first planting of the church, brought in the form, so the form, in restoring the church, brings in the power.

So much for the first argument, which is the main hinge; and the consideration of this will serve for the confirmation of the rest; which I shall therefore but just touch upon.

ARGUMENT II. All who ought to be admitted visible church members, ordinarily, ought to be baptized; but the infants of professing parents ought to be admitted visible church members, and therefore, ordinarily, they ought to be baptized.

That baptism is the door of admission into the

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f Ps xxxvi. 8. g 1 John iv. 19. h Mal. ii. 15. i Isa. vi. 13.

ible church, was showed before; *we are baptized one body.*[k] That then which is to be proved, is, t the seed of believers ought to be admitted visi- church members; and this has been so frequent- and so fully proved, that a hint or two on this id may suffice.

. The seed of believers, by God's gracious ap- ntment, under the Old Testament, were to be nitted members of the visible church; and that icious appointment has never yet been repealed; refore, they are to be admitted such still. It is e, that the ceremonial institutions, which were t the accidentals of the Jewish church, are abol- ed, (they were a *yoke*,) but it is as true, that the ential remain; though therefore the particular ht of admission be changed, for a special reason, accidental, it doth not therefore follow that infant urch membership, which is an essential branch of e constitution, is repealed. If infants be cut off m the body, it is either in judgment or in mercy: t in judgment, for where did they, as infants, mmit a forfeiture? not in mercy, for it can neither a benefit to them, nor to their parents, nor to the urch in general. If then professing parents did rmerly bear their children to the Lord, why do ey not still?

2. Our Master hath expressly told us, that *of ch is the kingdom of God*, (Mark x. 15.) i. e. the sible church is the kingdom of God among men, id infants belong to that kingdom. A short view the story will throw some light on the doctrine of fant baptism, and therefore we will turn aside a ttle to consider it: and observe in it,

(1.) The faith of the parents, or other friends, ho brought the children to Christ. They brought eir *children*—παιδια, little children; Luke calls em βρεφη—*infants* (the word is used concerning esus in the manger). They brought them to Christ, s the great Prophet, to receive his blessing; not, s many others, for the cure of bodily diseases, but r a spiritual blessing. It seems then, that infants re capable of spiritual benefits by Christ: and it the greatest kindness their parents can do them, bring them to him by faith and prayer, to receive em. These infants were brought, that Christ ight touch them: though infants cannot take hold f Christ, yet that doth not hinder, but that he may ake hold of them. Paul reduceth his interest in hrist to this, (Phil. iii. 12.) *For which I am appre- ended of Christ Jesus:* and the best of those who ave known God, must conclude with a *rather are known of God.* Infants have need of Christ, and hrist hath supplies for infants, and therefore to whom else should they be brought? *he hath the words f eternal life.*

(2.) The fault of the disciples in rebuking those who brought the children. It is Satan's policy to keep children from Christ; and he doth it, sometimes, under very plausible pretences. The disciples thought it a reflection upon their Master, to trouble him with such clients. We must not think it strange, if we meet with rebukes in the way of our duty: carnal reason, and a misguided zeal, prevail, not only to keep many from coming to Christ themselves, but to put them upon rebuking and hindering others; especially at their first dedication.

(3.) The favour of Christ to them. He was displeased with his disciples (ηγανακτησε); he took it very heinously, that they should thus misrepresent him to the world as unkind to little ones; and said, *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.* And the reason added is very considerable, *for of such is the kingdom of God;* i. e. his kingdom of grace, or the church (τουτων): not only of those who are disposed as children, for then he might have said the same of a lamb, or a dove, and have ordered those to be brought unto him: the word generally signifies not similitude, but identity; nor can any one instance be found where it excludes the person or thing mentioned. *They that do* (τοιαυτα) *such things, are worthy of death;* (Rom. i. 32.) doth not that include the things before mentioned? The argument then from this passage plainly stands thus: the question was, Whether infants might be brought to Christ to be blessed by him? By all means, saith Christ, for they are members of the church, and therefore I am concerned to look after them: they belong to the fold, and therefore the Shepherd of the sheep will take care of them. And therefore, not only in compliance with the believing desires of the parents, and in compassion to the infants, but to give a rule to his ministers in all generations of the church, *he took them in his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.* Thus did he outdo their expectations, and give them more than they could ask or think. It is true he did not baptize them, *for he baptized none;* (John iv. 2.) nor was baptism as yet perfectly settled to be the door of admission; but he did that which was tantamount, he invited them to him, encouraged the bringing of them, and signified to his disciples (to whom the keys of the kingdom of God were to be given) that they were members of his kingdom: and accordingly conferred upon them the blessings of that kingdom. And his giving them the thing signified, may sufficiently justify his ministers in giving the sign.

3. In other societies, the children of such as are members are commonly looked upon as members. Though a wise man doth not beget a wise man, yet a free man begets a free man. The king of England would give those small thanks, who should cut off

[k] 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.

all the children of the kingdom from being members of the kingdom. Our law calls natural allegiance, due by birth, *alta ligeantia—high allegiance*, and he that oweth it is called, *subditus natus—natural liege subject*. And it is the privilege of the subject, as well as the prerogative of the king, that it should be so. And shall it not be allowed in the visible kingdom of Christ? By the Jewish law, if a servant married and had children, all the children born in the master's house were the master's, and were taken under his protection, and interested in provision of the family: though they were not as yet capable of doing any service, yet they were part of the master's possession. This law David applies spiritually, (Ps. cxvi. 16.) *O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid;* born in thy house. And those consult neither the honour of the master, nor the credit of the family, nor the benefit of their children, who, though servants in Christ's family themselves, will not let their children be such.

To deny the church membership of the seed of believers, is to deny privileges to those who once had them, and who have never forfeited them. It is, in effect, to deliver their children to Satan, as members of his visible kingdom; for I know no mean between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. Give me leave then, as the infants' advocate, to make their complaint in the words of David, (1 Sam. xxvi. 19.) *They have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods:* and to present their petition for a visible church membership, in the words of the Reubenites and Gadites, (Josh. xxii. 24, 25.) *For fear lest, in time to come, your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord.* Therefore, according to the warrant of the written word, we maintain baptism, as a sign of the church membership of our infants; *that it may be a witness for our generations after us, that they may do the service of the Lord, and might not be cut off from following after him.* For, whatsoever those who are otherwise minded uncharitably suggest, *the Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know, that it is not in rebellion, nor transgression against the Lord.* We desire to express as great a jealousy as they can do for the institutions of Christ, and are as fearful of going a step without a warrant.

Several other scriptural arguments have been undeniably urged, to prove the church membership of infants; but what was said to prove their covenant right, and to show the reasons of it, serve indifferently to this; for the visible church, and the external administration of the covenant, are of equal latitude and extent. Grant me, that infants are of that visible body, or society, *to which pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenant,* &c. in the same sense in which these pertained to the Jews of old, and to their seed; and I desire no more. That is their covenant right, and their church membership, which entitleth them to baptism.

ARGUMENT III. If the infants of believing parents are in some sense *holy*, they have a right to the ordinance of baptism; but it is certain, that they are in some sense holy, and therefore have a right to be baptized. There is a twofold holiness;

1. Inherent holiness, or sanctification of the Spirit: and who dares say, that infants are not capable even of this? He that saith infants cannot be sanctified, doth, in effect, say, that they cannot be saved; (for without holiness no man can see the Lord;) and he that can say this must be * *a hard-hearted father:* and if they may be internally sanctified, *who can forbid water, that those should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* Those who baptize only adults, cannot be certain that all they baptize are inherently holy; nay, it appears that many of them are not so. There is also,

2. A federal holiness; and this is that which we plead for. It is very true, that inherent holiness is not propagated, (we are all *by nature children of wrath,*) but that doth not hinder the propagation of federal holiness. The children of believers, it is true, are born polluted, but it doth not therefore follow, that they are not born privileged. David acknowledgeth the corruption which his mother bore him *in*, and yet pleads the privilege she bore him *to*, (Ps. cxvi. 16.) *Thy servant, the son of thine handmaid;* and again, (Ps. lxxxvi. 16.) *Save the son of thy handmaid.*

To prove this federal holiness, two Scriptures are chiefly insisted upon; viz. Rom. xi. 16, 17. *If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches; and if some of the branches were broken off, and thou being a wild olive, wert grafted in,* &c. That children are branches of their parents none will deny; that inherent holiness is not communicated to the branches, is certain; it must therefore be meant of a federal holiness; which is explained by being grafted into the good olive-tree, i. e. the visible church: the fatness of this olive-tree is the external privileges of church membership; a fatness which some did partake of, who were then broken off. The other passage is, 1 Cor. vii. 14. *Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.* Unclean, means upon a level with the seed of the Gentiles: so unclean is used, Acts x. 28. The children of parents, one or both of whom are believers, are not to be looked upon as thus unclean, but *holy;*

* Durus pater infantium.

i. e. separated and set apart for God; federally holy.

ARGUMENT IV. If the infants of believing parents are disciples, they are to be baptized; but they are disciples, and therefore to be baptized.

1. They are disciples; for they are intended for learning. If you send little children to school who can learn little or nothing, you do it that they may be ready to be taught, as soon as they are capable. If our Lord Jesus has cast little children out of his school, wherefore doth he appoint his ministers to teach them, and express so particular a care to have the *lambs fed?*

2. Circumcision was a yoke upon *children* particularly, yet that is called a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, Acts xv. 1, 10. therefore children are disciples.

3. They who are so to be received in Christ's name, as that Christ himself is received in them, are to be reckoned the disciples of Christ; but the infants of believers are so to be received. See Mark ix. 37. Matt. xviii. 5. compared with Matt. x. 42. Luke ix. 48. They are said to belong to Christ, and must be received as such: as children, they can only be received as creatures, but as the children of professing parents, they may be received in Christ's name; as belonging to Christ, i. e. as disciples.

ARGUMENT V. If it is the duty of all Christian parents solemnly to engage, dedicate, and give up their children to God in covenant, whereby those children are obliged to be to God a people, then they ought to do it by baptism, which is the engaging sign; but it is the duty of all Christian parents thus to engage their children to God, and therefore they ought to baptize them.

1. It is the duty of Christian parents to engage their children to God in covenant. This hath been the practice of God's covenanting people, (Deut. xxix. 11.) *Your little ones stand here to enter into covenant with the Lord.*

(1.) Parents may oblige their children to that which is good. God, as the spring and fountain of our being, may and doth oblige us in a way of sovereignty; and parents, as the natural instruments of our being, are therefore empowered to oblige us in a way of subordinate agency. If not to enlarge the obligation, (though *Jonadab the son of Rechab*[1] did that, and his seed are commended for their observance of his charge,) yet to strengthen and confirm it. The law of God allowed such power to a father as to disannul a vow made by his daughter in his house, though she were come to years of understanding. Much more is it in the power of parents, to oblige their children in infancy to that which is plain and undisputed duty. Hannah was accepted in devoting her son to the Lord as a Nazarite from the womb, (1 Sam. i. 11.) nor was it ever questioned whether she might do it or not. Whatever was the matter of Jephtha's vow, his daughter never disputed his power over her. And human authorities, that speak of this parental power as consonant to the law of nature, might easily be produced, if it were material. The common law and custom of our nation, as well as of all other civilized nations, doth abundantly evince it. It is past dispute, that as far as a child hath any thing by descent from his father, the father hath power to determine the disposal of it, in a lawful way, (especially to pay debts,) and to bind his child accordingly. We derive our beings by descent from our parents, who may therefore doubtless determine the disposal of them for God, and communicate them to us charged with that great debt of duty which we owe to the sovereign Lord. The case is much strengthened, if the obligation be built upon a contract confessedly in favour of the child, and greatly to his advantage; which is the case here. Such an obligation implying, by way of penalty, in case of an after-refusal, a forfeiture of the privileges so contracted for. Our children are parts of ourselves, more ours than any thing we have in the world: not ours to be alienated from God, (nothing is so ours,) but to be devoted and given up to him. If it be in the power of parents to prejudice their children, by their breach of covenant, (for God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children,) may they not have a power to benefit their children by an adherence to the covenant?

(2.) If they *may* thus oblige their children to that which is good, certainly they *ought* to do it. When we give up ourselves to God, we ought to give up all that we have to him, to be devoted to him according to its capacity. Those who say, they give themselves to God, but will not give him their children, *keep back part of the price.* They ought, especially, to dedicate *them*, as a testimony of their sincerity in the dedication of *themselves*, and as a means to induce their children to be his. Those who are in truth the Lord's, will lay out all their power and interest for him; and what greater power and interest can there be, than that of parents in, and over, their children?

2. If this must be done, can it be done in any better way than by baptism; which is instituted to be the mutual engaging sign, and the seal of a covenant between God and man? Under the law, whatever was devoted to God, was to be disposed of, according as it was capable, in such a way as might tend most to the honour of God, and best answer the ends of the dedication. To this purpose is the law; (Deut. xxvii.) and though this law be not now in force, the reason of it remains: God is as jealous of his honour as ever. Now the children of believers, notwith-

[1] Jer. xxxv. 18, 19.

standing their infancy, are capable of receiving the privileges of the covenant; (are capable of visible church membership;) and therefore are to be dedicated to God by baptism, the seal of the covenant, and the instituted sign of admission into the visible church. And to say that our children are to be dedicated to God, no otherwise than our houses, and estates, and callings, are to be dedicated to him, when really they are capable of a higher dedication, is to wrong both ourselves and our children; and to derogate from the honour of our Master, who would have every thing that is given to him brought as near to him as may be.

ARGUMENT VI. If it be the will and command of the Lord Jesus, that all nations should be discipled by baptism; and children, though a part of all nations, are not excepted, then children are to be discipled by baptism: I say, discipled by baptism, for that is plainly intended by the words of the institution, Matt. xxviii. 19. *μαθητευσατε βαπτιζοντες—admit them disciples by baptizing them*, as was showed before. The command is to disciple them; baptizing them is the mode of executing that command. As if a general should say, Enlist soldiers, giving them my colours; (or any like sign;) giving them the colours would be interpreted, enlisting them. So, *disciple them, baptizing them*, doth not note two distinct acts, but the body and soul of the same act; as granting land by sealing a deed, or giving *livery and seisin*. I have said before, that baptism doth not *give* the title, but *recognize* it, and complete that church membership which before was imperfect.

And all nations are to be so discipled. Hitherto, the nation of the Jews only had been discipled, by circumcision; but now, the partition-wall is taken down, and all nations are to be in like manner discipled, by the New-Testament ordinance of initiation; i. e. all consenting nations. If any communities or individuals refused, the apostles were to shake off the dust of their feet against them, as having no lot or part in the matter.

And surely infants are a part of nations; and in the discipling of nations, not a *dissenting* part, but a *consenting*, by those who are the trustees of their wills. And our Lord hath not excepted them. There is not the least word in the commission, or any where else in the whole Bible, which implies the exclusion of infants from visible discipleship, when their parents became visible disciples. And, for my part, I dare not except where Christ hath not excepted; especially where the exception would tend so much to the dishonour of Christ, the straitening of the church, the discomfort of the saints, and contradict the clear light of so many other scriptures. I dare not exclude any, who do not exclude themselves, nor are excluded by those, who have a natural interest in them, and power over them.

In this *magna charta*, therefore, we leave the cau of infants fully vindicated; and are willing to stan or fall by this commission. Many other argumen might have been insisted upon; particularly th doctrine and practice of the primitive church: bu this shall suffice.

I should next have proceeded to answer the ob jections of the antipedobaptists; but that hath bee so fully done by others, and in a great measure don in the defence of the foregoing arguments, that shall be brief in it.

OBJECT. I. It is objected that infants are no capable of the ends of baptism, having neither un derstanding nor faith. To this I answer,

(1.) That they have as much understanding a the children of the Jews had, who were circumcised and therein received the seal, both of *justification* (Rom. iv. 11.) and of *sanctification*, (Deut. xxx. 6 and baptism is no more. (2.) That there are many ends of baptism of which children are capable, though not of all till they come to some use of rea son. Infants are capable of being admitted subjects into Christ's visible kingdom, which is the primary intention of baptism. A lease, or covenant, between a landlord and a tenant, may be of use to a child, though he understands it not; nay though, when he grows up, he may, perhaps, forfeit the benefit of it. (3.) Parents may, and must, herein transact for their children; being appointed by nature their agents, and having a power to oblige them in other things, and therefore much more in this, which is not only the duty, but the privilege, of their children. Nor is there any danger, that the guilt of covenant-breaking should lie at the parent's door, in case of the apostasy of the children, because the parents promise not to do the duty themselves, but engage their children to do it; and only oblige themselves to contribute their best endeavours thereunto.

OBJECT. II. It is objected, that infant baptism doth more hurt than good. But certainly,

(1.) What hurt it doth is only through the ignorance or corruption of those who abuse it. Though it may be true, that many carnal people are strengthened in their delusions by their infant baptism, it is well if it be not as true, that many are, in like manner, hardened by being rebaptized; for it is too plain that they are not all saints indeed. While on the other hand, (2.) There are many humble serious Christians, who can experimentally speak of the benefits of it. Its many practical uses will be shown hereafter. For my own part, I cannot but take this occasion to express my gratitude to God for my infant baptism, not only as it was an early admission into the visible body of Christ, but as it furnished my pious parents with a good argument (and I trust, through grace, a prevailing argument) for an early dedication of my own self to God in my childhood. If God has wrought any good work upon my soul, I

lesire, with humble thankfulness, to acknowledge he moral influence of my infant baptism upon it.

OBJECT. III. We have no precept, (say they,) nor precedent, in all the New Testament, for infant baptism.

Though we have already shown considerable footsteps of it in the New Testament, yet, in answer to his objection, we further add, (1.) It is sufficient hat the essentials of an ordinance be clearly instituted, though the circumstantials, or accidentals, be not. Christ instituted the Lord's supper, but we have neither precept nor precedent for admitting women to it. Our opponents say, that the practice of baptizing actual believers only, is more agreeable to the practice of Christ and the apostles; I say, that the practice of admitting men only, to the Lord's supper, is more agreeable to the practice of Christ and the apostles; and let the consequents stand or fall together. The substance of the ordinance of baptism is clearly instituted by Christ for the admission of visible church members, and it is left to us to infer the application of it to all those who have a right to visible church membership; which it is undeniably proved that infants have. (2.) Supposing that we cannot show any precept, or precedent, in the New Testament, for baptizing the infant seed of Christians, neither can the anabaptists show one word of precept, or precedent, for baptizing the child of any one Christian at years of discretion, in all the New Testament. I challenge them all to produce any one instance of the deferring of the baptism of any believer's child to years of discretion. Now the lawyers have a rule, *that an estoppel against an estoppel sets the matter at large.* We have no such clear direction, as some may think there should have been, what to do with the seed of believers; and if the dispute be drawn in the New Testament, I know not whither to appeal more properly than to the Old; where we find such abundant evidence of the church membership of the infant seed of believers, and of their title to the ordinance of initiation, while we do not find a word in all the New Testament which deprives them of either, (but a great deal in affirmance thereof,) that we conclude (blessed be God, abundantly to our satisfaction) that they still remain in full force and virtue.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE NECESSITY AND EFFICACY OF BAPTISM.

HAVING inquired what baptism is, and to whom it is to be administered, our next inquiry must be, what stress is to be laid upon it? And here we have need to walk circumspectly, for fear of mistakes, on the right hand, and on the left. What I have to say on this head shall be reduced to the following questions:

QUEST. I. Whether baptism be necessary to salvation?

In answer to which, we must have recourse to the known distinctions of *(necessitas præcepti)* what is necessary because commanded, and *(necessitas medii)* what is necessary as a mean; and also *(necessitas hypothetica)* conditional necessity, and *(necessitas absoluta)* absolute necessity. And so it seems that baptism is, *conditionally*, a necessary duty; but not, *absolutely*, a necessary mean. We have adversaries to deal with on both hands; some, who are so far from thinking it a *necessary mean*, that they deny it to be a *necessary duty;* (so, many of the Socinians;) and others, who not only plead for it as a *necessary duty*, but assert it to be *necessary as a mean* of salvation: *(so the papists:)* and the truth seems to be between them.

1. The necessity of water baptism, as a continuing duty, is proved,

(1.) From the will and command of the Lord Jesus; *Go and disciple all nations, baptizing them:* which was intended to be a warrant, not only to the apostles, in planting the church, but to all ministers, in all following ages; as the promise annexed doth abundantly prove, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* The ordinance of the Lord's supper is expressly said to continue till Christ's coming, i. e. till the end of time, (1 Cor. xi. 26.) and no reason can be given, why baptism should not run parallel with it, since they are both signs and seals of the same grace. Nor did the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, supersede external ordinances, but rather lead to them; for having received the Holy Ghost, is assigned as the reason why water baptism should not be forbidden to Cornelius and his friends; (Acts x. 47.) and though the apostles are bidden to go into *all nations* and baptize, they went not into *any of the nations* till after the Spirit was poured out.

(2.) From the continuance of *circumcision* in the Old-Testament church: which was instituted not only for the founding of that church, but to be observed *in their generations*, Gen. xvii. 9, 10. As therefore circumcision continued a standing ordinance in the Old-Testament church till the first coming of Christ, by a parity of reason, baptism, which comes in the room of it, is to continue a standing ordinance in the New-Testament church till the second coming of Christ.

(3.) From the continuance of the end intended in this institution. It was instituted to be the door of admission into the visible church: and without some such door, either all must be shut out, or all must be taken in: either of which would be absurd; for the church is a society distinct from the world, and the God of the church is a God of order, and not confusion.

Though the children of believing parents have, by their birth, a remote church membership, and covenant right, yet it is requisite for the preserving of order in the church, that there should be a solemn recognition of that right, and some visible token of admission. As in the case of converted heathens; though, upon their believing, they have a right to the privileges of the covenant before baptism, (for baptism doth not confer a right, but only recognize it,) yet it was the will of Christ that they should be solemnly admitted by baptism, for the honour of the church as a distinct society. Thus, in the ordinance of marriage, (an ordinance common to the whole world,) the mutual declared consent of both parties, is the essence of the marriage, yet, for order's sake, all civilized nations have enjoined a solemnity of investiture.

(4.) From the continuance of the benefits conferred, and the obligations imposed, by baptism: which are such as pertain, not only to those who are converted from heathenism to Christianity, but to those also who are born of Christian parents. We are all concerned to *put on Christ*, and to have *communion with Christ in his death*; we all need *the remission of sins*, and *the sanctification of the Spirit*, and *eternal life*; so that while we are expecting these privileges, and taking upon ourselves these engagements, it is fit that both should be done, in that ordinance, which was appointed to signify and seal both the one and the other. The church must be *sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water, by the word, till it is presented a glorious church*, Eph. v. 26, 27.

And this may be of use to rectify the mistake of some well-meaning people, who, having been unhappily defrauded of the privilege of baptism in their infancy, when grown up, do themselves neglect it; thinking it sufficient, that they do that which is intended by baptism, though they do it not in that way. Such would do well to consider, what a slight they put upon the law of Christ. It would be thought too harsh, should we, in this, parallel baptism to circumcision, which had so severe a sentence annexed to the law which required it, (Gen. xvii. 14.) *The uncircumcised man-child*, (i. e. when he is come to years of discretion,) *whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised*, (not only through the neglect of his parents, when he was an infant, but by his own, when grown up,) *that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.*

2. Baptism is not *simply* and *absolutely necessary as a mean.* This is the popish extreme. But, as in doctrine, so in worship, the middle way is the *good old way*, the good safe way.

When we speak of baptism as a mean, and the necessity of it as such, we must distinguish between external and internal means. Internal means are such as have so necessary a connexion with the end, as that the end cannot be obtained without them. Such are faith, repentance, and justification: means of salvation absolutely necessary; so that salvation is never without them as the means, nor they without salvation as the end. But external means are not thus connected with the end, but only subservient to it, by God's ordination. Not so, but that the end may sometimes be obtained without them, and they may often miss of the end: and sacraments are such means of salvation. The Council of Trent denounceth a curse against those who say, that baptism is not absolutely necessary to salvation.* But that it is not thus necessary, is fully proved by the following arguments:

(1.) God is a free agent in dispensing his grace: *he begets of his own will*; which doth not depend upon the will of the parent, so as to be frustrated by his neglecting to baptize his child.

(2.) Circumcision, under the Old Testament, was not absolutely necessary to salvation; therefore baptism is not under the New: for then, the condition of Christians would, in this respect, be harder than that of the Jews. God appointed circumcision to be administered on the eighth day, and not before; and certainly it would have been very hard upon children to have deferred it so long, if it had been necessary to salvation. David's child died on the seventh day, consequently uncircumcised, and yet he comforts himself with the hope of its salvation. (2 Sam. xii. 23.) *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.* Yea, all the children of Israel were forty years together in the wilderness without circumcision, which it is hard to suppose was damning to those who were born and died during that time. The threatening, Gen. xvii. 14. is against the wilful neglect, and not the involuntary privation.

(3.) If baptism were thus absolutely necessary, unbaptized children would perish eternally, without any fault of their own; and so the child would bear the personal iniquities of the father: which is contrary to Ezek. xviii. 20.

(4.) Our Saviour doth plainly put a difference between the necessity of faith, and the necessity of baptism, to salvation, Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved*; but he doth not say, he that *believeth not*, and *is not baptized, shall be damned*, but only, *he that believeth not* shall be damned; for faith is the internal, baptism but the external, mean.

(5.) The infants of believing parents have an interest in the promises of God, which is the thing signified by baptism; and can it be imagined, that they should be shut out of heaven for want of the sign?

* *Si quis dixerit baptismum liberorum esse, (hoc est non necessarium ad salutem,) anathema sit*; which the Trent catechism explains to be such a necessity, *ut nisi per gratiam baptismi Deo renascantur, (homines,) in sempiternam miseriam, et interitum, a parentibus, sive fideles, sive infideles sint, procreantur.*

To suggest such a thing, is not only very uncharitable in itself, but, we think, reflects dishonour upon Christ; the goodness of his nature, the grace of his covenant, and the constitution of his kingdom; and must needs be very uncomfortable to Christian parents. When God hath said, that he will be a God to believers, and to their seed, the neglect of man, much less the wise providence of God, shall not make the promise of no effect.

QUEST. II. What effect hath baptism upon baptized infants, and how doth it operate?

The anabaptists say, *it hath none at all*, and therefore argue, to what purpose is this waste? Their exceptions have been answered before. The papists assert, that sacraments confer grace, *(ex opere operato,)* by virtue of the sacramental action itself: but as to baptism, it is expressly said, that it doth not save us, as it is the *putting away of the filth of the flesh*, (which is the sacramental action,) but *the answer of a good conscience*, (1 Pet. iii. 21.) and there we leave the question. And others, even many protestants, have said, that the sacrament of baptism doth as an instrumental, efficient cause, confer, and effect, the grace of actual regeneration; so that the infant baptized is freed, not only from the guilt, but the dominion of sin, and the Spirit of grace is given, as the seed, whence the future acts of grace and holiness, watered by the word, may, in time, spring forth. Thus, the church of England concludes concerning every baptized child, that it is *regenerated, and born again.* In opposition to which Mr. Baxter pleads, "That baptism was not instituted to be a seal of the absolute promise of the first special grace, *I will give them a new heart*, but to be a seal of the covenant properly so called, wherein God engageth himself, conditionally, to be our God, to save us, and we engage ourselves to be his people, to serve him, and so to perform the said condition; and if not to be a seal of the absolute covenant, then not to be an instrument of conveying the grace of that covenant, but a mean of conveying the good promised in the conditional covenant, according to the capacity of the subject: and therefore it seals, to the infants of believers, the promise of salvation, so as to be a mean of conferring the benefit of salvation upon them, not as a physical, or hyperphysical, instrument, but only as a moral instrument; by sealing, and so conveying, a legal right, which is afterwards improvable, as a mean of working a real change upon the souls of those who have faith, and the use of reason." What I have to say on this head is,

1. As to the relative influence of baptism, I look upon it to be the door of admission into the visible church; so that all who are duly baptized, are thereby admitted visible church members, and (to borrow the Hebrew phrase before mentioned) *gathered under the wings of the Divine Majesty;* and the new covenant being externally administered in the visible church, it is conditionally sealed to all who are baptized (and particularly to the seed of believers) upon the parents' faith: the parents' will being accepted for the child's, and the parents' present consent and dedication, laying an obligation upon the child for the future.

This then is the efficacy of baptism; it is putting the child's name into the gospel grant; and thus is a sealing ordinance, and a binding ordinance. The child's actual faith, and repentance, and obedience, are thereby made (to speak in the lawyers' language) *debita in præsenti, solvenda in futuro*, debts then incurred, to be paid at a future time. And surely this is abundantly sufficient, to invite and encourage parents to dedicate their children to God in baptism. For if this be true, (as it certainly is,) it is not (that *nudum signum*) that empty childish thing, which the antipedobaptists love to call it.

2. As to the real influence of baptism, we cannot be so clear; nor need we. As far as the parents are concerned, we are sure, that the children are *not* so regenerated, as not to need good instructions, when they become capable of them, and yet *are* so regenerated, that if they die in infancy, parents may take comfort from their baptism in reference to their salvation: and as to the children, when they grow up, we are sure, that their baptismal regeneration, without something more, is not sufficient to bring them to heaven: and yet it may be urged, (as I said before,) in praying to God to give them grace, and in persuading them to submit to it.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF BAPTISM.

BAPTISM, as a sacrament, consists of a sign, and the thing signified by it. Our inquiries now must be about the sign, and the administration of that; in which several things claim a brief consideration: viz.

I. Concerning the manner of administering, or applying water, to the person baptized.

And about this the enemy hath sowed tares; hath raised a great dispute, whether it must necessarily be done by immersion, i. e. by dipping the person all over in water: and there are those, who make this mode of applying water, of the very essence of the ordinance, and, with much bitterness, condemn those, who have so much of the spirit of the gospel, as not to impose, and make necessary, what Christ hath not made so; and who, if water be but solemnly applied, reckon it altogether indifferent, whether it be by infusion, inspersion, or immersion. Let us,

1. Examine a little the strength of their cause, of which they are so confident. And,

1. They plead that the word βαπτιζω (from βαπτω) signifies *only* to immerse, or dip into water; and recourse is had to the Greek Lexicons in proof of this; but to little purpose, as the best Lexicons render it, to wash in general, as well as to wash by plunging, or dipping: and we really think, that when Christ saith, *Baptize*, he means no more than *wash with water*. But, not to trouble ourselves with searching the sense of the word in other Greek authors, we will inquire into the sense of it in the New Testament, and hope our opponents will not refuse to join issue with us in the inquiry. Heb. ix. 10. we read of *divers washings*; (διαφοροις βαπτισμοις—*divers baptisms*;) he instanceth in the water of purification, verse 13. *the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean*: compare the two, and it appears, that that is a true baptism, or washing, which is by sprinkling.*

Luke xi. 38. the Pharisees wondered that our Lord *had not first washed*, (οτι ου πρωτον εβαπτισθη—that he was not first *baptized*,) not that he was not plunged all over in water, but that he did not wash his hands. Compare Mark vii. 2, 3, 5. It seems then, that the washing of the hands may be the baptizing of the man: and why not the washing of the face. Nay, it should seem that the usual way of washing even the hands, among the Jews, was not by dipping them into water, but by having water poured upon them: for Elisha's ministering to Elijah is thus described, *he poured water upon the hands of Elijah*, 2 Kings iii. 11.†

Mark vii. 4. among the superstitious washings or *baptisms* (as they are called) of the Pharisees, we read of the baptism (i. e. washing) of tables, or rather beds, or couches, as the word (κλινων) properly signifies; and was it likely, that beds or couches, or even tables, should often be washed by plunging them into water? Surely it was done by sprinkling, or pouring, water upon them.

Rev. xix. 13. we meet with ιματιον βεβαμμενον—*a garment baptized with blood*, i. e. stained or tinged with blood; and that by sprinkling, as appears by comparing the parallel passage, Isa. lxiii. 3. *Their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garment, and so will I stain all my raiment.* If the word then, so often, or indeed any where, signifies washing by sprinkling, or pouring on of water, as it certainly doth, the argument for immersion, from the signification of the word, falls to the ground.

2. They assert, that Jesus Christ, and others in Scripture, were baptized by immersion; and therefore that any other mode of baptizing is not only unlawful, but renders the baptism null and void. To which we answer,

(1.) Supposing that Christ, and others in Scripture times, were baptized by immersion, yet it doth not therefore follow, that that mode is still indispensably necessary to the essence of the ordinance. Christ often preached sitting; is it therefore unlawful for ministers to preach standing? But that which is more considerable is, that bathing was very much in use in those times and places, especially among those who were under the ceremonial law; and while this was an ordinary way of washing, to which all persons were accustomed, perhaps it was the fittest to be used in baptism, where washing is the sign. But with us it is far otherwise: bathing is a thing seldom used; and therefore, as in the Lord's supper, not the posture of recumbency, which our Lord used, (according to the custom of the country,) but our own ordinary table gesture, is the most proper; so in baptism, not dipping, which was then an ordinary way of washing, but sprinkling or pouring water, which is now the usual way of our daily washing, is most proper. For the sign, in both ordinances, is taken from a common action, and the more like it is to that common action, the better, and the more instructive. But,

(2.) There is no such convincing evidence from Scripture, that Christ and others were baptized by dipping, as (supposing the obligation of the pattern) may justly be required to prove it essential to the ordinance.

As to the baptism of Christ, it is far from certain that it was by immersion. John indeed is said to have baptized εν υδατι—*in water*, but so is Christ said to baptize εν πνρι. Doth that mean *in fire*? no, *with fire*. The preposition εν frequently signifies *with*. See Rev. xix. 21. εν ρομφαια—*with the sword*.

Again, it is urged, that Jesus was baptized εις Ιορδανην—into Jordan. But the preposition (εις) often signifies *at*, as well as *in*, or *into*. However, it does not certainly express plunging in the water: they then went bare-legged, and therefore might readily go into the water and be washed, without being dipped all over.

Moreover, Christ is said, after his baptism, to go out of the water, Matt. iii. 16. and Mark i. 10. but it is remarkable, that in both places the original is not εκ υδατος—*out of the water*, but απο του υδατος—*from the water*; i. e. he came up the ascent from the river: though indeed, had he been only ankle deep, and not plunged, he might have been said to have come out of the water.

And once more, John chose a place to baptize in, where there was *much water*, John iii. 23. but the words are, υδατα πολλα—*many waters*, i. e. many

* Daniel iv. 30. *His body was wet with the dew of heaven*, the LXX render, και απο του δρυος του ουρανου το σωμα αυτου εβαφη—his body was *baptized* with the dew of heaven.

† This mode of washing the hands, is still in daily use amongst the Hindoos, many of whose customs are of great antiquity, and bear a striking resemblance to those of the ancient Jews. See Mrs. Kindersley's Letters from the East Indies, No. lxii. and lxiv.

streams; therefore probably shallow, unfit for plunging: and accordingly travellers find the river Enon only a small brook, which a man may step over.

And as to others, whose baptism we read of, I find none, except the eunuch, of whose immersion there is any apparent probability. Several were baptized in private houses; as Paul, and the jailer, and his family; the latter in the night; and it is very unlikely that he had any conveniency for being dipped there.

(3.) They plead, Rom. vi. 4. and Col. ii. 12. *Buried with him in baptism;* where they fancy an allusion to the ceremony of baptizing by dipping: which I see no necessity for at all. Good wits may from thence illustrate the text, and no harm done; but to force so uncertain an illusion, so far, as to condemn almost all the baptisms of the Christian church, in all ages, is a great wresting of Scripture. Our conformity to Christ lies not in the sign, but in the thing signified. Hypocrites and unbelievers, like Simon Magus, though they be dipped an hundred times, are not buried with Christ by baptism; and true Christians are by faith buried with Christ, though they be not dipped at all; having *fellowship of his sufferings*, and *being made conformable unto his death*, Phil. iii. 10. *We are baptized into the death of Christ*, and by baptism *put on Christ;* but it doth not therefore follow, that there must needs be, in the external sign, any thing that resembles either killing or clothing.

(4.) The testimony of men is much urged in this case: and I believe that immersion, yea, trine immersion, or plunging the person baptized three times, was commonly used in very early ages; and that, as far as popery prevailed, a great deal of stress was laid upon it: and the church of England, in the rubric of baptism, prescribes dipping, and tolerates sprinkling only in case of bodily weakness: but our recourse is to the law and the testimony.

2. Let us now see what is to be said against baptism by immersion, or plunging in water. And,

1. It unavoidably occasions a very great distraction and discomposure of mind, in the management of a solemn ordinance; and is therefore evil. Putting an adult person, unused to bathing, over head in water, must needs, for the present, unfit him for any thoughts suitable to such a solemnity: and great care is to be taken, that we may *attend upon the Lord without distraction*, 1 Cor. viii. 35.

2. In many cases, this mode is very perilous to the *health*, and even *life*, of the body: and God hath taught us, that he will have *mercy, and not sacrifice*, Matt. xii. 7. In so cold a climate as ours, especially to some people, and at some seasons, bathing in cold water would be almost certainly fatal. Ask the best physicians, if this be not true.

3. To baptize naked, or next to naked, (which is supposed, and generally practised, in immersion,) is against the law of modesty; and to do such a thing in public solemn assemblies, is so far from being tolerable, that it is abominable, to every chaste soul: and especially to baptize women in this manner. If, when veils were commonly used, the woman was to have a veil on her head, to cover her face in the congregation, *because of the angels*, (whether that mean young men, or ministers, or heavenly spirits,) I am sure the argument is much stronger, against her appearing almost naked in such a congregation. Is this for *women to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shame-facedness, and sobriety?*[m]

4. However, I am sure, that to lay such a stress upon the ceremony of dipping, as not only to condemn, but to nullify, and reproach, all those baptismal washings, which are performed by pouring on water, is very uncharitable, and dissonant from the spirit of the gospel. *Bodily exercise profiteth little.*[n] In sacraments, it is the truth, and not the quantity, of the outward element, that is to be insisted upon. In the Lord's supper, eating a little bread, and drinking a little wine, sufficeth to exhibit the thing signified; and we need not, nay we should not, fill ourselves with either; and yet it is called a supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. So in the ordinance of baptism, the application of a little water, provided there be water, and a washing with that water, is sufficient to signify spiritual washing. Aaron and his sons were the Lord's priests, though the blood of consecration was only put *upon the tips of their ears, and on their thumbs, and great toes*, Lev. viii. 24.

3. We shall just hint at what is to be said, for the administration of baptismal washing by sprinkling, or pouring, water on the face, or head; which is the more usual mode.

The overthrow of the other mode is, indeed, enough to establish this: washing is the main matter in the sign, which is sufficiently done by sprinkling or pouring water. But I add further, the thing signified by baptism is frequently, in Scripture, set forth by sprinkling or pouring water, but never, that I remember, by dipping or plunging into water. Thus, Isaiah xliv. 3. *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty;* and Isaiah lii. 15. *He shall sprinkle many nations;* a prediction or promise, which many think refers to the ordinance of baptism, and seems to be particularly fulfilled, in the commission to *disciple all nations, by baptizing them.* And again, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. *I will sprinkle clean water upon you.* And particularly, in the improvement of our baptism, we are said to be *sprinkled from an evil conscience*, Heb. x. 22. So Tit. iii. 5, 6. that which is signified by the laver of regeneration, is the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he *shed* on us. The

[m] 1 Tim. ii. 9.

[n] 1 Tim. iv. 8.

blood of Christ is called *the blood of sprinkling*, Heb. xii. 24. If immersion is so proper, as some conceive, to represent our being buried with Christ, (though to me it seems far fetched,) I am sure sprinkling doth much more plainly represent the sprinkling of the blood, and the pouring forth of the Spirit of Christ upon the soul: and if one scripture alludes to one manner of washing, and another to another, it intimates to us, that the mode is in itself indifferent, and that Christians are left to choose that, which, upon other accounts, is most convenient and edifying.

On the whole then it appears, that the dust which has been raised about the mode of baptism, is nothing else but a device of Satan, to perplex ignorant, and to delude unstable, souls. I shall say but very little,

II. Concerning the persons by whom baptism is to be administered: concluding, that gospel ministers, and they only, have authority to administer this ordinance; for they only are *the stewards of the mysteries of God*. To them only the commission is given, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. *Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them, teaching them to observe*, &c. The same persons who are to teach, by office, are to baptize; and *no man should take this honour to himself, but he that is called of God*. I proceed therefore to consider,

III. The time when baptism is to be administered. And,

1. As to the adult, who are baptized upon a personal profession, it is plain, that in Scripture times, it was administered presently, and without delay, upon their profession of Christianity: *the same day there were added* (i. e. by baptism) *three thousand souls*, (Acts ii. 41.) the same day that they believed. The eunuch was baptized immediately upon his believing, (Acts viii. 38.) and Paul, as soon as ever he came to himself, and the scales fell from his eyes, *arose, and was baptized*, Acts ix. 18. And once more, the jailer was baptized, *he and all his, straightway*, Acts xvi. 23.

This was the method the apostles took: but afterwards the church generally required more time; and deferred the baptism of the adult, till they had long been in the state of catechumens, and given ample testimony of their proficiency in knowledge, and of a blameless conversation. The apostolic constitutions appoint three years for the catechumens to be instructed, yet allowing an admission sooner in case of a manifest maturity: but was not this an excess of strictness, and making the door of the church straiter than Christ and the apostles made it? And certainly, the practice which afterwards prevailed, of restraining the administration of baptism to certain days, and of deferring it till the point of death, from a notion that sin committed after baptism was unpardonable, are to be imputed only to ignorance and superstition.

2. When is it to be administered to infants?

In Cyprian's time, (about the middle of the third century,) it seems that there was a controversy about the baptizing of infants; not whether they ought to be baptized, (that had never been disputed,) but concerning the time when; whether on the second or third day, or (as circumcision of old) on the eighth day? For the determination of which, Cyprian, with the advice of sixty-six pastors, wrote a synodical letter, to prove, that it was not necessary to defer it till the eighth day, as the mercy and grace of God are not to be denied to new-born children: and in this, saith Austin, he did not make a new decree, but preserved the ancient faith of the church.

As to the time of baptizing infants then, the mean is to be kept between two extremes.

(1.) It should not be causelessly deferred, as if it were a thing indifferent whether it be done or not. It argues a contempt of the ordinance, and a slight regard to our children's covenant right, to delay the administration, perhaps because the feast cannot yet be provided, or such or such a fine friend procured to stand gossip. Thus a solemn and important institution of Christ is often made to truckle to mean and inconsiderable respects. Moses's deferring to circumcise his child, had like to have cost him dear. On the other hand,

(2.) It should not be superstitiously hastened and precipitated. There are many, who are most negligent about it while their children are well, who, if they are sick, and likely to die, will be very solicitous to get it done with all speed; and will call up a minister at midnight rather than fail. But where there hath not been a culpable delay, i. e. where no convenient opportunity hath been let slip, if it please God to visit the child with threatening sickness, I see no reason for thus precipitating the ordinance. Baptism is the appointed door into the church militant, which supposeth the child likely to live; not into the church triumphant, which supposeth the child dying. The administration of baptism is a solemn thing, and ought to be attended with all the natural circumstances of solemnity; and therefore, to hurry the administration, while the child is dying in the arms of the minister, is by no means agreeable. Besides, that this practice is grounded upon a great mistake, viz. that baptism is absolutely necessary to the salvation of the child. Let people be taught, that baptism doth not confer, but recognize, their children's covenant-right; and that, where there is no wilful neglect, God accepts the will for the deed, and will not lay to the charge of us, or ours, the want of that, which, by his own wise providence, we were prevented having in a regular way, and with due solemnity; and they will not be so eager to precipitate the administration.

IV. It will be proper to say a little concerning the place where baptism is to be administered.

In the first ages of the church, it was usual to baptize any where, where there was water, but always (as Dr. Cave observes) as near as might be to the place of their public assemblies; for it was seldom done without the presence of the congregation. In process of time, they erected *baptisteria* (fonts we call them) near the church doors, to signify, that baptism is the door of admission into the church.

All that I have to observe upon this head, is, that it is most fitting and convenient, that the ordinance of baptism be administered publicly, in the face of the congregation. And this is the judgment of the best ordered churches, even of those in which baptism is most commonly administered in private; in which it is rather tolerated as a corruption, than countenanced by the constitution. The church of England allows not of private baptism, except in cases of necessity; and even then, appoints the public recognition and ratification of it. The church of Scotland, by a late act of General Assembly, has strictly forbidden the administration of either of the sacraments in private. And the reformed church in France likewise appoints, that baptism should be administered in the presence of the congregation. And there are good reasons why it should be performed publicly: for,

1. It is an act of solemn religious worship, and therefore should be attended with all due circumstances of solemnity; and the more public the more solemn. Huddling it up in a corner is no way agreeable to the state and grandeur of the ordinance; it should be performed in a *holy convocation*.

2. It is the initiating ordinance; the matriculation of visible church members; and therefore ought to be public, that the congregation may be witnesses *for* the church membership of the person baptized, and *against* his apostasy. In covenanting with God, as in other contracts, it is good, for the strengthening of the obligation, to have witnesses. Thus, Josh. xxiv. 22. *You are witnesses against yourselves*, &c. nay, (*v.* 27.) *this stone shall be a witness to you.*

3. It is an edifying ordinance.

It is of great use to all, to be frequently reminded of their original corruption, and of their baptismal covenant; which is best done by the public administration of this ordinance: and we should consult, not only what makes for peace, but what makes for edification: and therefore ministers ought not to refuse their hearers the benefit they might derive from being spectators of this solemnity. The sacred mysteries of God covet not obscurity, like the profane mysteries of the pagan religion. Truth seeks no corners. Though this institution has not any gaudy attire to recommend it, yet it hath so much true native beauty and excellency, that it needs not decline a public administration.

I would not indeed drive this point further than it will fairly go. I do not question but that in many cases, baptism may be administered in private. The jailer was baptized in his own house. And how far ministers should herein comply with the inclinations of their people, I cannot say. Paul preached *privately to them who were of reputation*;[o] and, perhaps, we may from thence take a direction in this case. Some may be *led* to public baptism by degrees, who would not be *driven* to it all at once. I see no reason indeed why any Christians should be ashamed of their profession: it is a culpable bashfulness when we blush to own our covenant relation to God, for ourselves, and for our seed.

The public administration of baptism would be of good use to establish people in the truth concerning it, and would therefore help us to keep our ground against those who oppose it. Many waver about infant baptism, because they were never duly affected by it; as they might have been by the solemn administration of it in public. On all these accounts, I recommend baptizing in public as very convenient, though I would not have it imposed as absolutely necessary.

V. I shall just mention the rites and ceremonies attending the administration of baptism: and as to these, Dr. Cave well observes, that in the apostolic age baptism was administered with great plainness and simplicity; and the apostles' age was certainly the best and purest age of the church. Strict conformity to the Scripture rule, without the superadded inventions of men, is the true beauty of Christian ordinances.

1. Every thing is *sanctified by the word and prayer*,[p] and particularly sacraments.

The *word* is our warrant for what we do; and therefore should be read, as our commission, *Go ye and disciple all nations, baptizing them.* The nature of the ordinance should be opened, and of the covenant of which it is the seal, and care taken to fix a right notion of the institution, and to raise the affections of the congregation.

*Prayer* must accompany the word: for it is not from any virtue in the administration, or in him who administers, that sacraments become effectual means of salvation, but only by the blessing of Christ; which blessing is to be sought by prayer. Anciently, saith Dr. Cave, all the formality of baptism was a short prayer, and repeating the words of the institution: and it appears, that for several ages, this baptismal prayer was not any set prescribed form, but, as Justin Martyr saith of their other prayers, (οση δυναμις,) according to the minister's ability.

This prayer ought to be suited to the ordinance: acknowledging the goodness of God to us in making a new covenant, when the first covenant was so irre-

[o] Gal. ii. 2.

[p] 1 Tim. iv. 5.

parably broken, and in appointing sacraments to be the seals of that covenant, *that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation;* giving him thanks, that the covenant of grace is herein so well ordered, that not only we, but our seed, are taken into it; dedicating the child to God accordingly; begging that he would honour his own ordinance with his presence, and sanctify and bless it to the child; that the washing of the child with water, in the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may effectually signify, and seal, his ingrafting into Christ; and that he may thereby partake of the privileges of the new covenant, and be engaged to be the Lord's.

2. For as much as it is the parents' profession of faith in Christ, and obedience to him, that entitles the child to baptism, according to the tenor of the new covenant, it is requisite that at least one of the parents do publicly make that profession, in the presence of the congregation, at the demand of the minister; and likewise declare a desire to have the child brought, by baptism, into the bond of the gospel covenant; and a full purpose and resolution to bring it up (if spared in life) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; i. e. as a Christian. But if the parents are dead, or cannot possibly be present, the minister may doubtless go upon the known profession of the parents, or the proof of it, by the attestation of those who knew them. Only (as was observed before) in this case it is requisite that the children's guardians, or next relations or those who have the care of them, do undertake for their pious and Christian education.

3. Our Master hath prescribed the words of dedication, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* this therefore should be constantly and devoutly pronounced, as the water is applied; and immediately before, or after, the doing of this, it may not be amiss to declare, that, according to the institution and command of our Lord Jesus Christ, "I do admit this child a visible church member."

4. After the administration, it is proper that the minister should be a remembrancer to the parents of their duty in bringing up their child as a Christian. The people likewise have need, upon such occasions, to be directed in, and excited to, the practical improvement of their own baptism. After which, it is fit to conclude with suitable prayers and praises.

But before we close this chapter, it will be proper just to mention a few appendages to the administration of baptism: as,

1. Naming the child. And this is a laudable custom, against which I know of no objection. It was borrowed from the Jewish custom of naming children at their circumcision; and as baptism is the enrolment of the person baptized among professing Christians, it is not improper then to fix the name (or *notamen;*) though too many ignorant people consider the giving of the name as the main matter against which they should therefore be cautioned.

2. Godfathers and godmothers. And concerning these we have spoken before; and showed how unreasonable and unscriptural a practice it is, to deprive the parents of the right of dedicating their own children, to devolve it upon those who have no part nor lot in them. Early footsteps indeed there are of this sponsorship in the primitive times, but quite of another nature.

3. Rites and ceremonies which have been used in the administration of this ordinance.

And in sacraments, where there is appointed something of an outward sign, the inventions of men have been too fruitful of additions; for which they have pleaded a great deal of decency and significancy, while the ordinance itself hath been thereby miserably obscured and corrupted. I shall only mention the most considerable of those used very anciently in the church; (of those now practised in the church of Rome, see the ritual;) e. g. 1. A kind of exorcism and insufflation; which signified the expelling of the evil spirit, and the breathing in of the good spirit. 2. An unction, or anointing the person baptized upon the breast, and between the shoulders, which they fancied very proper to signify the sanctification of the heart to receive the law of God, and the preparation of the shoulders to bear the yoke of Christ; and that Christians were *kings and priests unto God.* 3. Dr. Cave thinks, that with this unction they used the sign of the cross, made upon the forehead; which they did to show, that they were not to be ashamed of the cross of Christ. 4. Trine immersion, or putting the person baptized three times under water, once at the mention of each of the persons of the Trinity, to signify their distinct dedication to each. And, 5. After a second anointing, when the person was taken out of the water, they put on him a white garment, to signify, that *those who were baptized into Christ, had put on Christ,* and were to walk *with him in white.**

And, besides all these, many countries had particular customs of their own. But setting aside the word, and prayer, and the circumstances of natural decency, I see no need of any of these additions. The spouse of Christ looks most glorious in her native beauty, and needs not the paint and tawdry attire of a harlot. Purity is the true glory of gospel ordinances; and all these appendages, instead of adorning the institutions of Christ, have really deformed and injured them. And those who plead for the continuance of some of these ceremonies

* From the wearing of this white garment, *Whitsunday* took its name, that being a great day of baptism.

open a door for the admission of the rest. The chrism, or anointing with oil, is as significant, and as ancient, and has as much foundation in Scripture, as the sign of the cross; and if we must be governed so much by the practice of antiquity, while the other is retained, why must this be exploded? or rather, when this is so decently laid aside, why should the other be so strictly imposed; especially when it is become such a stone of stumbling, and such a rock of offence?

## CHAPTER V.

### OF THE PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF OUR OWN BAPTISM.

It hath been the accursed policy of the great enemy of souls, by raising disputes about Christ's truths and ordinances, to rob the church of the benefit of those truths and ordinances. While the field lies in suit, what should be spent in improving the ground, is thrown away in maintaining the suit, and the land lies fallow. There would not be so much quarrelling about infant baptism, if there were but more care to make that practical improvement of it which is required. It is owing to a carnal heart, that the benefit of it is not obtained, and then the thing itself is disputed. In this circle many a poor soul hath been made giddy: infant baptism is questioned, because it is not improved; and then it is not improved, because it is questioned. *If any man* set himself seriously to *do his will* in this matter, by a diligent and conscientious improvement of his baptism, *he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether we speak of ourselves.*[a] We should labour to find, by experience, the moral influence of our baptism, both upon our comfort and our holiness.

When I say we must improve our baptism, I mean, that we must carry it in every thing as a baptized people; and our whole conversation must be under the influence of our baptism. Would you have all our Christian duty in one word, it is, to behave in every respect as those who are baptized; that is, *to have our conversation as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ.*[b]

In opening this, I shall endeavour,

I. To show that it is our great concernment to improve our baptism.

II. To give some general rules for the improvement of our baptism. And,

III. To point out some particular instances in which we should improve our baptism.

I. It is the great concernment of those who are by baptism admitted members of the visible church, practically to improve their baptism, and to live accordingly.

In dealing with many people, it is much easier to direct them than to persuade them; to inform them what is to be done, than to prevail with them to do it. And of the many who lie under the baptismal vow, how few are there who are at all sensible of the engagement! as if their baptism were only the giving of them a name. The profane Lucian said, in derision of his baptism, that he got nothing by it but the change of his name: and multitudes there are who get no more.

The improvement of our baptism is very much our concernment, if we have any regard to honour, honesty, or interest.

1. In point of honour.

By our baptism, we assume the Christian name; and is it not a shame to profess one thing, and practise another? to own the *name*, and deny the *thing? Either change your name, or your manners*, was the reprimand which the great Alexander gave to his namesake, who was a coward. By baptism we engaged ourselves to be the Lord's; and bound ourselves, by the strongest ties imaginable, *against* all *sin*, and *to* all *duty*; and is it not a shame to say and unsay? The great ones of the earth, whose names are raised a degree or two above their neighbours, stand much upon the punctilios of their honour, and scorn to do any thing base, to disparage their families, or forfeit their ensigns of honour, or incur the disgrace of a broken sword, or a reversed escutcheon; and shall not one who professeth himself a citizen of the New Jerusalem, have so much of a generous and noble sense of true honour, as to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called, and the dignity to which he is advanced? *It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine,*[c] was part of the lesson that Solomon's mother taught him. Brutal excesses profane a crown, and defile the horn in the dust: and are not Christians advanced to be kings and priests? It is not then for Christians, who are baptized, it is not for Christians, who wear so honourable a name, to walk as other Gentiles walk. We shame ourselves before God and the world, if we, who by baptism are made members of that family which is *named of Jesus Christ*,[d] its illustrious head, do that which is unbecoming the family.

2. In point of *honesty*.

An honest man will be as good as his word. Having sworn, we must perform it; and having given up our names, we must not withdraw them. It is the character of a citizen of Zion, that *he sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not*; much less when he sweareth so much to his own good.

Jephthah argues himself into a very hard piece

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a John vii. 17. b Phil. i. 27.

c Prov. xxxi. 4. d Eph. iii. 15.

of self-denial from this topic, (Judg. xi. 35.) *I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and cannot go back. How shall we?* Rom. vi. 2.

3. In point of interest.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked. He will not be put off with shows and shadows. Baptism not improved, is no baptism, any more than the carcass is the man. Nominal Christianity is but real hypocrisy; the form without the power; the name without the thing. *He is not a Jew* (nor he a Christian) *that is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision* (nor that baptism) *which is outward in the flesh.*[e] The gospel is preached, either *for a witness to us,*[f] or (if that witness be not received) for *a witness against us:*[g] and so our baptism, instead of being a witness *to us*, if we neglect it, will be a witness *against us*. In the day of vengeance, Judah and Israel, become uncircumcised in heart, are set abreast with the rest of the uncircumcised nations, Jer. ix. 25, 26. Our baptism, if it be not improved, will be so far from saving us, that it will aggravate our condemnation. It is not *the putting away the filth of the flesh* that saves us, but *the answer of a good conscience towards God;* i. e. our conformity to our baptismal engagements. In early times, it was usual, in some churches, to lay up the white garment of the baptized, that it might be produced as an evidence against them, if they violated or denied that faith which they had owned in baptism.

A little further to illustrate this, let us consider,

1. That baptism is a *trust*, to which we must be faithful. The *profit of baptism* is answerable to the *profit of circumcision. To them were committed the oracles of God:*[h] we are entrusted with the *lively oracles;* the sacred laws of the kingdom of heaven; which if we misuse by an unsuitable conversation, we betray a trust.

2. Baptism is a *talent*, which must be traded with, and accounted for. It is a price put into the hand to get wisdom; and with this, as with other talents, the charge is, *Occupy till I come.* By working upon our souls a sense of the obligations we are laid under by our baptism, we put this talent into the *bank*, and, if we were not wanting to ourselves, might receive from it the blessed *usury*, of a great deal of comfort and holiness. I refer to Matt. xxv. 27.

3. Baptism is a *privilege*, which must be improved. It takes us into the visible church; makes us denizens of that ancient and honourable corporation; and entitles us to its external privileges; *the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises,* (Rom. ix. 4.) privileges capable of a great improvement.

4. Baptism is a *profession*, which must be lived up to. By baptism we profess relation to Christ, as *scholars* to our *teacher*, *servants* to our *master*, *soldiers* to our *captain*, *subjects* to our *sovereign*; all which relations call for duty which must be done. The law of nature, and the common sense of mankind, require, that we *be* and *do* according to our profession; and not profess one thing and practise another.

5. Baptism is an *obligation*, which must be performed. It is the seal of a bond. We are in bonds to God; penal bonds, to be the Lord's; which if we break, we expose ourselves to the penalty.

6. Baptism is an *oath*, which must be made good. A *sacrament* is a military oath; an oath of allegiance, to be true and faithful to the Lord Jesus; and having *sworn*, we must *perform it.*[i] An oath is a tie upon conscience: and this is an oath, to which God is not only a witness, (as to every oath,) but a party principally concerned: for to him are we sworn.

So then, if we do not make use of our baptism, we falsify a trust, we bury a talent, we abuse a privilege, we contradict a profession, we break a sacred bond in sunder, despise an oath, and cast away from us the cords of an everlasting covenant.

II. I am to give some general rules for the improvement of our baptism. And,

1. We must rightly apprehend the perpetual obligation of our baptismal covenant. That time does not wear out the strength of it: though it was administered long ago, yet (being a *specialty*, a bond sealed) it binds as firmly as if we had been baptized but yesterday. God was highly provoked by the breach of a covenant made with the Gideonites many ages before, 2 Sam. xxi. 2.

Baptism is an oath of allegiance, which no power on earth can absolve us from. It is a *perpetual covenant, never to be forgotten.*[k] God *will not* forget it, and we *must not* forget it: the former may comfort us, the latter quicken us. Compare two parallel scriptures, viz. 1 Chron. xvi. 15. *Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations*, borrowed from Ps. cv. 8. but there it is, *He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations;* both put together, speak the perpetuity of the covenant. God doth remember it for ever, and we must be always mindful of it. It is a covenant of salt, (2 Chron. xiii. 5.) an incorruptible, inviolable covenant, that is not, must not, cannot be disannulled. God is said to remember his covenant, when he brought his first-begotten into the world; it was to perform the oath, (Luke i. 72, 73.) though that oath was sworn many ages before. So what we do in religion we should do with a regard to our baptismal oath; in remembrance of the holy covenant, and in compliance with the purport and de-

e Rom. ii. 25, 28, 29. f Matt. xxiv. 14. g Mark xiii. 9.

h Rom. iii. 2. i Ps. cxix. 106. k Jer. l. 5.

sign of it. Upon some special occasions, God remembers his covenant; as when, after a controversy, he returns in ways of mercy, Lev. xxvi. 42. So upon special occasions, of trouble or temptation, or after we have fallen into sin, we should remember the covenant; which still stands in full force, power, and virtue. The superadding of repeated engagements to the same purpose, at the Lord's table, or upon other occasions, doth not supersede, but strengthen and confirm, that first and great engagement; and the design of those renewed covenantings, is to revive the sense of that early bond. God remembers *the kindness of our youth, and the love of our espousals*,[l] and we must not forget the covenant of our youth, and the vow of our espousals.

2. It is very good, when we grow up to years of understanding, solemnly to renew our baptismal covenant; and to make that our own act and deed, which our parents, as the trustees of our wills, to act for our good, (appointed so by God and nature,) then did for us. This will help to make the engagement more sensible, and consequently give it a greater and stronger influence.

This should be done (I think) by a solemn personal profession of *assent* to the gospel revelation, and *consent* to the gospel covenant; with a serious promise of a suitable and agreeable conversation: and this to be approved by the minister, or such others as are fit to judge of the seriousness of it. This is to be looked upon as a transition from the state of *infant* church membership, to that of *adult;* and as a solemn investiture in the privileges of the adult: which (according to the practice of the primitive church) may not unfitly be done by the imposition of hands. This is what is commonly called *confirmation;* the revival of which, and its restoration to its original use, Mr. Baxter, in his book on that subject, doth learnedly and convincingly plead for. The corruptions and abuses of an ordinance are no reasons for its total abolition. But this is one of those things which are much desired, but little practised; for, in the usual administration of confirmation by the bishops, so little is done to answer the intention, (and how should it be otherwise, when the confirmation of so many thousands is put into the hands of one man?) that it is too apparent, that the substance is lost in the shadow, and the thing in the name. While every deacon hath authority to administer the great ordinance of baptism, and is thought fit to judge of the capable subjects of it, it is a riddle to me, why the subordinate constitution of confirmation should be so strictly appropriated to bishops. The recognition of the baptismal covenant, and the profession of faith, repentance, and a holy life, are fittest to be made in the presence of those to whom the right hand of fellowship is to be given in settled stated communion, or their representatives: and the investiture were most properly received from that pastor, who is to administer other ordinances, and through whose hands those external privileges of adult church membership are to be communicated.*

Where this is neglected, or negligently performed by the congregation, it is yet the duty of every one to do it, as far as possible, for himself in private; in the most solemn manner, as in the presence of God: the more expressly, the better; and it may add some strength to the engagement, to *subscribe with the hand unto the Lord*.[m]

Our law requires, that he who is *(subditus natus)* born within the king's allegiance, and consequently to all intents and purposes the king's subject, shall, when he is of the age of twelve years, take an oath of allegiance, and promise that, to which he was bound before, viz. to be true and faithful to the king, (Co. Inst. i. 68. b. 172. b.) and this oath to be taken among the neighbours in the leet, or in the sheriff's town. I would compare the confirmation I am pleading for to this. It is the solemn profession of that allegiance which was before due to Christ, and an advancement to a higher rank in his kingdom.

The sooner this recognition is made, the better. Youth is quickly capable of impressions; and the more early the impressions are, usually they are the more deep and durable.

3. We must rightly understand the nature of the ordinance, and acquaint ourselves with it.

It is a seal of the covenant of grace: we should therefore know the promises and privileges which God seals to us, and the conditions which we seal back to him. How many baptized persons are there, who are altogether *strangers to the* covenant of promise! who look upon baptism only as a thing of course; nothing more than the custom of the country! No wonder they do not improve that which they do not understand. Baptism being the badge of our profession, to understand that, is to understand our holy religion; the nature, duties, privileges, and designs of it; to all of which our baptism doth some way or other refer. It is sad to consider what ignorance of these reigns, even in the Christian world; and how many are little better than baptized heathens.

The apostle Paul several times presseth holiness and sanctification, from the consideration of the design and tendency of our baptism. Let us examine two or three particular passages, and make some improvement of them.

The first is, Rom. vi. 3. *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?* This he urgeth as a known confessed truth. The nature of our baptism, and the engagement it lays upon us, is a thing which it is a shame

[l] Jer. ii. 2. [m] Isa. xliv. 5.

* See an instance of this confirmation in its primitive simplicity, in the life of Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston.

for Christians to be ignorant of. As if a soldier should not know the meaning of his being enlisted. We were baptized *into Jesus Christ*—εις Χριστον, as εις Μωσην—unto Moses, 1 Cor. x. 2.

But how are we baptized *into the death* of Jesus Christ? I answer, we may be said to be baptized into Christ's *death*, upon a threefold account.

1. As baptism is a professing ordinance; a sign and token of our Christianity. *By* and *in* baptism we profess,

(1.) To believe the death of Christ as a fact. It is one of the main hinges upon which the door of salvation turns, one great article of our creed, that he was *crucified* and *dead*. We profess to believe, (and it is no small matter to believe it,) that he *could* die. It was not possible that he should be holden by the pains of death; how then was it possible that he should be seized, and taken by them? It implies the belief of his incarnation; for if he had not been man, he could not have died. And that he *did* die; was willing to make his soul an offering for sin. And certainly, that the Lord of life should die for the children of death, the offended Prince for the unnatural rebel, the just for the unjust, is such a mystery, as requires a great faith to receive: which we do in baptism accordingly profess. And there is no need of the sign of the cross in token of that profession; the instituted ordinance is sufficiently expressive of our being baptized into Christ's death, without the invented ceremony.

(2.) To depend upon the death of Christ as our righteousness. In baptism we profess our expectation to be saved by the blood of a crucified Jesus; and to hope for heaven, in, and by, that new and living way, which is laid open for us through the veil of his flesh. We entertain the gospel revelation concerning Christ's death, not only as a *faithful saying*, but as *worthy of all acceptation*. We profess an approbation of, and a complacency in, the method which infinite wisdom took, of saving a guilty world, by the cross of Christ. It was the cross of Christ which was *to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness*;[n] and therefore an owning of that, is justly made so material a point in Christianity.

2. As baptism is a receiving ordinance.

We are baptized into Christ's *death*; i. e. God doth in that ordinance seal, confirm, and make over to us, all the benefits of the death of Christ. All our privileges, both those of our way, and those of our home, are the fruits of his cross; the purchase of his blood; and in baptism are conferred upon us, on the terms of the gospel: so that if we fulfil the condition, we may expect the privileges; e. g. pardon of sin, access with boldness to a throne of grace, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the heavenly inheritance.

3. As baptism is an engaging ordinance.

We are baptized into Christ's *death*: i. e. we are obliged by our baptism,

(1.) To comply with the design of his death; and this in gratitude for the privileges purchased by it. Christ died *to save us from sin*,[o] *to redeem us from all iniquity*,[p] *from our vain conversation*;[q] the intention of his death was not only to *justify*, but to *sanctify*: now, by baptism, we oblige ourselves to join in with this design of Christ; to set ourselves against that which he died to kill, and that is sin, and to press after that which he died to advance, and that is holiness.

(2.) To conform to the pattern of his death.

Christ's dying *for* sin, was intended to be the pattern of our dying *to* sin: so the apostle explains it in the following words (v. 4—6.) *We are planted together* (τω ομοιωματι) *in the likeness*; it notes not merely a similitude, but a conformity; and that procured, and wrought, by the virtue and efficacy of Christ's death. Hence the mortifying of sin is called *crucifying it*; (Gal. v. 24.) a slow but a sure death: and we are said to be *crucified with Christ*, (Gal. ii. 20.) because of the influence which his death hath upon the mortification of sin. Christ rose to die no more, rose and left his grave-clothes behind him; that is the pattern of our living to righteousness, as his death is the pattern of our dying to sin: see both together, Phil. iii. 10. *The power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings*. We should from hence take instruction how to improve our baptism. *as we have received Christ, so we must walk in him*. We have received *Christ crucified*, and so we must walk in him: being *baptized into his death*, we must *bear about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus*.[r] If ministers must preach, people must live, as those who know nothing but *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. Think for what end Christ died, and you were baptized into his death; and use it as an aggravation of sin, as an answer to temptation, and as an assistant to faith; use it for the crucifying of corruption, for the constraining of you to holiness, and for your comfort in all your sorrows. Again,

That of the apostle in the next words, and Col. ii. 12. are to the same purpose; *we are buried with him by baptism*. In which, whether there be an allusion to the custom of dipping or plunging, in baptism, is not at all material; (if there be, it is but an allusion;) the meaning is plainly this: that by our baptism we are obliged to conform to the burial and resurrection of Christ, in our sanctification, dying to sin, and living to righteousness; putting off the old man, and putting on the new man. We are by baptism buried with Christ,

[1.] As baptism signifies and seals our ingrafting into Christ, and our union with him. We are, in Christ our head, buried by baptism, and raised

[n] 1 Cor. i. 22. [o] Matt. i. 21. [p] Tit. ii. 14. [q] 1 Pet. i. 18. [r] Eph. v. 25, 26. [s] 2 Cor. iv. 10.

gain; he the first-fruits, and we the lump. Our ns are said to have been *laid upon Christ*, and he to ıve *borne them in his own body*, (1 Pet. ii. 24.) so that hen he was buried, our sins were put into the same ave, and buried with him. Therefore they are not nputed to us, being dead and buried with Christ. hus was sin, by Christ's sacrifice, *condemned*.[t] But e rose again, not *in the likeness of sinful flesh*; he id not bear our sins in his glorified body. Now ıptism signifies, and seals, our fellowship with hrist, in his sufferings and resurrection; viz. our eedom from the condemning and commanding ower of sin. He is our second Adam, the common ather, agent, root, and representative of all true elievers. Baptism, therefore, being the sign of our nion with him, we are said therein to die, and be uried, and rise again, with Christ.

[2.] As baptism signifies and seals our engagement to be the Lord's.

We are, by our baptismal covenant, obliged to ortify sin, and in baptism receive the promise of ıe Holy Ghost for that purpose. *We are buried by aptism*; i. e. we are, in profession, and obligation, uite separated and cut off from sin; as those who re not only dead, but buried, are quite parted from he living, and have no more any intercourse, correspondence, or fellowship, with them. We are likeise *risen again* to another sort of life; a divine and eavenly life. Not as the widow's son and Lazarus ere raised, to live just such a life as they lived efore; but as Christ was raised, who, though he ontinued on earth forty days after his resurrection, id not show himself openly, nor converse with this orld as he had done; but his life was altogether eavenly, and no more in the world: thus, our baptism, obliging us to die to sin, and live to righteousess, we may be said therein to be buried and risen ith Jesus Christ.

A Christian, therefore, who is by baptism buried ith Christ, and yet lives in sin, is like a walking host; or the frightful motion of a dead body. We hould often remember, that we are *buried*, i. e. cut ff from a life of sin, and *risen*, i. e. entered upon life of holiness. We should therefore see to it, saith the excellent Davenant,) that what is done nce sacramentally, in baptism, should be always lone really, in the life.

I shall only produce one passage more, viz. Gal. ii. 27. *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* The design of the apostle's discourse there, is to bring them nearer, and ind them faster, to Jesus Christ. The two great ivals to Christ were, the works of sin, and the orks of the law: the former, his rival as the Lord heir *Ruler*; the latter, as the Lord their *Righteousess*. From both these, he is here industriously dissuading them; and he argues from their baptism, *being baptized into Christ, ye have put on Christ*; ye *have* done it; i. e. you have professed to do it, and consequently are obliged to do it. *Put on Christ*, that is,

1. The righteousness of Christ for justification. Put it on, as Jacob put on the garments of his elder brother, when he came for the blessing; as the high priest put on the appointed robes, when he went in to make atonement. To put on the righteousness of Christ is,

(1.) To consent to it; willing and glad to be saved by that righteousness, which he, by dying, hath brought in. This is to *receive the atonement*.[u] The garment is already prepared; made up of Christ's merits, dyed with his blood: glorious apparel! it is our consent that puts it on. This is called, *buying the white raiment*, Rev. iii. 18. Upon our believing submission to the methods of gospel grace, and entertaining that faithful saying as worthy of all acceptation, Jesus Christ is made of God unto us *righteousness*,[v] and we are made *the righteousness of God in him*.[w]

(2.) To confide in it. We must be putting it on every day, in all our approaches to God, making mention of Christ's *righteousness, even of that only*;[x] abiding by it as our plea; casting anchor there; laying the stress of our souls upon this foundation. The most of men are putting on other things; some righteousness of their own; at best *a covering too narrow to wrap themselves in*;[y] but we who are baptized into Christ, profess to put on Christ; that *Sun* with which the church is *clothed*;[z] that *best robe*;[a] that *broidered work*.[b]

2. The spirit and grace of Christ, for sanctification. Grace is often compared to clothing. This is that *fine linen*, clean and white, Rev. xix. 8. With this we must be clothed, as the earth with grass and corn; which are not only *adherent*, but *inherent*. Thus we must *put on charity*, (Col. iii. 14.) *mercies*, (Col. iii. 12.) *humility*, (1 Pet. v. 5.) and in general, *the new man*, (Eph. iv. 24.) the same with putting on Christ, Rom. xiii. 14. compare v. 13. To put on the grace of Christ, is to get the habit of it planted in our souls, and the acts of it quickened and invigorated: to have grace, and to use grace. To have the disposition, and not to exercise it, is like having clothes lying by us, and not wearing them.

In baptism we have put on Christ; i. e. have professed and promised it. Whether the custom of putting a white garment upon the person baptized, was so ancient, as that we may suppose an allusion to that, is not material; I suppose rather, that this custom might, in after ages, take rise from this scripture.

Christ is here compared to clothing; for,

t Rom. viii 3. u Rom. v. 11. v 1 Cor. i. 30. w 2 Cor. v. 21. x Ps. lxxi. 16.

y Is. xxviii. 20. z Rev. xii. 1. a Luke xv. 22. b Ezek. xvi. 10.

1. Clothes are for decency. Sin made us *naked*, Christ covers our *shame*.[c] Again, clothes are for distinction.[d] Christians are distinguished from other men by their putting on Christ. Hereby it is known what country they belong to; grace is their livery, their badge, their cognizance. Further, clothes are for *dignity*. And this is honourable clothing; recommends us to God; (which no other clothing doth;) it is clothing of *wrought gold*,[e] in the sight of God of great price. And once more, clothes are for *defence*. We must put on Christ, not only as attire, but as armour; nothing else will keep us safe from the *wind and the tempest*,[f] and *the fiery darts of the wicked one*.[g]

Having thus put on Christ in profession, let us do it in truth and sincerity; having begun to put him on, let us be doing it daily more and more; for that is to improve our baptism.

Baptism doth not work as a spell, or charm, or by any physical influence; but it acts as a motive, or argument, by moral agency; and we then make use of our baptism, when we improve that argument with ourselves, for our quickening, caution, and encouragement, as there is occasion. That which shakes many in the doctrine of infant baptism, is the uselessness (as they apprehend) of the administration, and the mighty advantages which they fancy in adult baptism. But before they conclude thus, they would do well to answer Dr. Ford's proof of this truth, "That there is much more advantage to be made, in order to sanctification, consolation, and several other ways, of the doctrine and practice of infant baptism, than of that doctrine and practice, which limits baptism to personal profession at years of discretion." And it is to be feared, that the neglect of the improvement of infant baptism hath very much conduced to the opposition that hath been made to it.

Baptism is a good motive to be improved,

1. By ministers, in preaching to their people. By this we have some hold of them. It is especially to be improved in dealing with young people. We have this to say to them, that being baptized, they are of the fold; lambs of the flock which we are to feed. We have this to say, against their youthful lusts, and for their early piety, that they are baptized, and are thereby laid under special obligations to be the Lord's. This is to be much insisted upon in training up children in the way wherein they should go. It is improvable, in our dealing with them, about their first conversion and return to God, and their after growth and progress in holiness. In treating with souls, we generally find it easier to direct than to persuade, to tell people what they should do than to prevail with them to do it; we have need to choose out words to reason with them: therefore those are poor friends to the success of the word, who rob us of that argument which infant baptism puts into our hands.

2. By people in preaching to themselves. The apostle saith, (παρακαλειτε εαυτους, Heb. iii. 13.) *Exhort yourselves*, reason the case with yourselves, press things upon your own hearts; and, among the rest, we should press upon ourselves the consideration of our infant baptism, and be ever mindful of the covenant, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. I am now,

III. To mention some particular instances wherein it is our duty to improve our baptism: and under each, I shall endeavour to urge the consideration of our baptism, especially as administered in infancy.

We ought to improve our baptism several ways.

1. Baptism, especially infant baptism, is to be improved, as a restraint from all manner of sin. While we are in an insnaring world, we lie continually exposed to temptation. A malicious spirit lays the plot, and a deceitful heart closes in with it; and thus the poor soul is drawn away, and enticed. These temptations are to be opposed, and resisted; all the powers of the soul must be summoned in to the resistance; and the consideration of our baptism, especially our infant baptism, would very much engage us to that resistance, and make it both vigorous and victorious. I say the consideration,

1. Of our baptism.

When we are tempted to be proud, or passionate, or intemperate, or unjust, or the like, then to remember that we were baptized, would be of excellent use, to silence and repel the temptation. Considering,

(1.) That sin is a contradiction to our profession. In baptism, we were solemnly admitted visible church members, and so took upon us the profession of Christ's holy and excellent religion: by wilful sin we give the lie to that profession, and run counter to it. We then put on Christ; and shall we put on our filthy rags again? Is this to walk as becomes the gospel? Is this to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and to answer that worthy name by which we are called? By baptism, we profess ourselves *dead unto sin*; cut off, and separated, from that life; and *how then shall we live any longer therein?*[h] *How shall we?* how *can we* for shame, so far contradict our profession, and walk contrary to the vocation wherewith we are called?

(2.) That sin is a reproach to our relation.

In baptism, we were admitted into that *family*, which is *named from Christ*,[i] its illustrious head; taken to be his *servants*; nay, (because *the servant abideth not* in the house *for ever*,) we have received

[c] Gen. iii. 7. [d] Rev. iii. 18. [e] Ps. xlv. 13. [f] Isa. xxxii. 2. [g] Eph vi. 16. [h] Rom. vi. 2. [i] Eph. iii. 15.

*the adoption of sons;* we are enlisted under Christ's banner, and become his soldiers; are entered into his school, and call him Master (διδασκαλος) and Lord; and doth it become those who stand in such relations, to maintain a friendly intercourse with Christ's avowed enemy? How unbecoming is it for those who profess such a friendship for Christ, to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness! *for what communion is there between Christ and Belial? Holiness becomes God's house,*[k] and household; his servants, and service: how unbecoming then is unholiness? If, indeed, we had never been put into such relations, it had been another matter; there had been at least not *that* evil in our sin: but after we have engaged to follow Christ as his servants and soldiers, shall we run our colours, and return to our old master? When we are tempted to sin, let us think we hear Christ saying to us, as to the twelve, *Will ye also go away?*[l] you, my friends, and followers? (Και συ τεκνον;) What thou, my son? as Cæsar to Brutus. *Thou, a man mine equal, mine acquaintance?* as the Psalmist, Ps. lv. 13.

(3.) That sin is an ill requital of our privileges. They were precious privileges which were sealed to us in baptism; the privileges of the gospel charter, the heavenly corporation; all the inestimable benefits of the covenant of grace; protection from arrests, an interest in the promises, free access to God, and the special tokens of his favour: *and do we thus requite the Lord?*[m] Shall we sin against so much love, preventing love, distinguishing love? Shall we *despise* such *riches of grace?*[n] The least spark of true generosity would abhor such ingratitude.

(4.) That sin is a breach of our baptismal engagements. We were then sealed, and bound, to be the Lord's; and shall we be so prodigiously unruly, as to break such sacred bonds in sunder, and cast away such cords of love from us? When a temptation to sin comes, answer it with that of the psalmist, *thy vows are upon me, O God!*[o] not upon me as a burthen, which I am weary of, but upon me as a bond, which I am obliged by. The covenant we were entered into, was most reasonable; the engagement just; it was but a confirmation of our former ties: and shall we falsify such engagements? Be not deceived, God is not mocked: therefore *vow* and *pay.*[p]

2. Of our infant baptism.

There is something in baptism, as administered in infancy, the consideration whereof would furnish us with a particular answer to temptation. The argument taken from our baptism, is so far from being less cogent for its infant administration, that it is really more so. Baptism engageth us in a quarrel with sin, but infant baptism with the grounds of it, doth hugely strengthen the engagement. For,

1. Infant baptism speaks our engagement in an *early* quarrel with sin.

We were betimes enlisted under Christ's banner; were from the cradle *buried with him in baptism;* and thereby engaged, that *sin should not have dominion over us.*[q] The early date of our covenants should very much strengthen the obligation of them. Shall I love that enemy, and lay it in my bosom, which I did so soon declare war against? When God would stir up himself to show kindness to Israel, he makes mention of his early friendship to them; *remembers the kindness of their youth,*[r] *his love to Israel when a child.*[s] When we would stir up ourselves to strive against sin, we should remember our early quarrel with it, our infant covenants against it. The strongest antipathies are those conceived from infancy; usually not afterwards removable; but taking rise so soon, become rooted in our nature. Such should our antipathy to sin be; and having been so early engaged against it, we should *early destroy it.*[t] This is a good argument for children to use against sin; that young as they are, they have long been bound in a bond against sin. We who plead with God *his loving-kindness of old*[u] to us, should plead with ourselves our engagements of old to him. This early engagement against sin should especially curb and cure that vanity, to which childhood and youth are subject. Austin observes it as a very ill consequence of the careless deferring of children's baptism till they grow up, that in youth the reins were the more let loose.*

2. Infant baptism speaks our engagement in an *hereditary* quarrel with sin.

It is not only a personal quarrel, espoused by ourselves, and no older than our own day, but it is an enmity entailed upon us by our ancestors; a hostility which came to us by descent. When our parents brought us to baptism, they did by us, as Hannibal's father did by him: when he was but a child of nine years old, he made him solemnly swear, with his hand upon the altar, to pursue the Romans with immortal hatred, and to do them all the mischief he could. Which, however justly reckoned inhuman and barbarous, in a quarrel between man and man, is a project truly pious between man and sin: to bequeath a hatred as by legacy. Our godly parents, who found sin such an enemy to themselves, did thereby lay an obligation upon us, to prosecute an eternal war against it, without thought of reconciliation or truce. Let us think then, when we are tempted to sin, was sin my father's enemy as well as my own? Is the quarrel with it of so long a standing, and shall I submit to it? Was the covenant of my ancestors against it, and shall I make a league with it; or ever entertain a good thought of that, which my parents did so much to set me against?

k Ps. xciii. 4. l John vi. 67. m Deut. xxxii. 6.
n Rom. ii. 4. o Ps. lvi. 12. p Eccl. v. 4, 5.

q Rom. vi. 4, 12. r Jer. ii. 2. s Hos. xi. 1.
t Ps. ci. 8. u Ps. xxv. 6. * Confes. lib. i. cap. 11.

Infant baptism implies such a war with sin, as Israel, by divine appointment, was engaged in against Amalek, a war *from generation to generation*;[w] and therefore *no peace with it*;[x] *no pity to be showed it; nothing that belongs to it spared.*[y] An hereditary quarrel must needs be inveterate.

3. Infant baptism speaks our engagement in a quarrel with *original sin*; which is the unhappy root and source of all the rest.

Baptism, at riper age, doth indeed bear a testimony against sin, but it gives no particular evidence, as infant baptism doth, against original corruption. Baptism tells us, indeed, that we are filthy; but infant baptism tells us that we are polluted from the beginning, *conceived in sin.*[z] Baptism in infancy particularly obligeth us to lay the axe to the root; that carnal mind, which is enmity against God. It leads us to the spring-head of these polluted streams, and directs us to employ all our care for the drying up of that. Would we see our own faces by nature? they are best seen in the waters of baptism: in them we behold ourselves *transgressors from the womb*;[a] and are thereby obliged to employ our forces against that sin that dwelleth in us; to put off *the old man, which is corrupt*; to curb the vicious propensity, and *to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts.*

Let us therefore make this use of our baptism, our infant baptism; having in profession put on *the armour of light, let us put off the works of darkness. My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not.*[b]

2. Baptism, especially infant baptism, is to be improved as an incentive to duty.

As we are Christians, we have not only temptations to be resisted, and sins to be avoided, but work to be done; great and necessary work, for God and our souls, and eternity. We were not sent into the world to be idle, or (like leviathan into the deep) to play therein. All the creatures were *created to work*; (as some understand Gen. ii. 3. לעשות) much more Christians, who are *created anew*, and that *to good works.*[c] We must *work the works of him that sent us.* Now nothing can more quicken us to that work, than a lively sense of our relation to the Lord Jesus Christ as his servants; *truly, I am thy servant.*[d] To maintain that sense, and to excite us to an answerable diligence in our duty, we should frequently consider our baptism; especially our infant baptism.*

1. Our baptism: which was the rite of admission into the relation of servants.

(1.) In baptism we were taken into our Master's family, and owned as members of it. It was the solemn recognition of our rights, as born in our Master's house. Our Lord Jesus, by that right of investiture, duly administered according to his appointment, did declare, that he took us into the number of his menial servants; and do you think we were taken into the relation for no purpose? Our Master (who was himself so very busy when he took upon him the form of a servant) keeps no servants in his family to be idle: the glorious angels that attend immediately upon his person, have work to do.

(2.) In baptism, we put on our Master's livery: it is the badge of our profession. We have put on Christ; i. e. we have done it in profession; are called Christians (a name full both of honour and obligation) from Christ our head. Now, shall we wear our Master's livery, and neglect our Master's work? This livery is our honour; we need not be ashamed of it; let us not, by our slothfulness, be a shame to it.

(3.) In baptism we obliged ourselves to do our Master's work. It is a bond upon the soul. A covenant like that of Josiah's, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. *To walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies.* When we begin to loiter, and spiritual sloth takes off our chariot wheels, let this help to quicken us, that in baptism we took the yoke of Christ upon us, and that we were not yoked to play, but to work.

(4.) In baptism we accepted our Master's wages. We had in that ordinance the privileges of the new covenant sealed to us; and we took them as our recompence, and earnests of more. We consented to trust God for a happiness out of sight, as the full reward of all our services, according to the tenor of the new covenant. Seeing then we have thus signified, and acknowledged, our expectation of *a kingdom that cannot be moved*, shall we not *serve God with reverence and godly fear?*

2. Our baptism, as administered in infancy, doth very much strengthen the engagement; and may help to quicken our dulness, and put us forward, when we begin to loiter. Our infant baptism doth bespeak our Master to be,

(1.) Our rightful Master. We are his by the first title, prior to all Satan's claims and pretensions; *truly his servants*,[e] for we were born in his house. If our engagements to him had been only the result of our own choice, we might have been tempted to think, that a recantation would dissolve the obligation: but we are the Lord's by a former dedication; and if afterwards we join ourselves to the citizen of

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w Ex. xvii. 16. x Deut. xxv. 19. y 1 Sam. xv. 3. z Psal. li. 5. a Isa. xlviii. 8. b 1 John ii. 1. c Eph. ii. 10. d Ps. cxvi. 16.

* See 2 Pet. i. 9. *He that lacketh these things*, (viz. the graces before mentioned, that is barren and unfruitful, v. 8.) *is blind, and cannot see afar off*, (λαθη, λαβων τυ καθαρισμυ των παλαι αυτυ αμαρτιων,) *forgetting that he received* (viz. in baptism) *a cleansing, or purification from his old sins*: whence note, that forgetfulness of our baptism is at the bottom of all our barrenness, and unfruitfulness, and deficiency, in that which is good.

e Ps. cxvi. 16.

the country, it is our own fault. The first conveyance stands, and cannot be invalidated by a subsequent deed; for there was no clause to reserve a power of revocation

(2.) Our kind Master. Kind indeed, who would take us into his family, and admit us to the protection, provision, and privileges of his family, when we were incapable of doing him any actual service. Being now grown up, this consideration should quicken us to a double diligence: that we may redeem the time lost when we were children, and make some grateful returns to our generous Master, for the early tokens of his good will. *When Israel was a child, then I loved him;*[f] and shall not we then study what we shall render for that love? It was our Landlord's kindness then to put our lives into the lease, and we are basely ungrateful if we now refuse to do the services, or are dissatisfied with them.

(3.) Our old Master. We have been long in his service; from our very infancy: we were born in his service; and shall we now draw back from, or drive on heavily in, his work? Shall we begin to tire now, and lose the things we have obtained? David pleads with God, (Ps. lxxi. 17, 18.) *Thou hast taught me from my youth up;* and we should plead it with ourselves. Sober servants love an old service, which they have been long trained up in. Were not our ears bored to the door-post, to serve for ever? and shall we fly off from our work now?

(4.) Our father's Master: one whom our fathers served, and recommended to us for a Master. Infant baptism speaks an hereditary relation to God, that comes to us by descent: my God, and *my fathers' God.*[g] Our fathers found him a good Master, and consigned us over to him, and to his service: shall we then neglect our duty, or be negligent in it? It is Paul's profession, (Acts xxiv. 14.) *So worship I the God of my fathers. Thy own Friend, and thy fathers' Friend, forget not;* thy own Master, and thy fathers' Master, forsake not. The way of religion is the good old way, in which they walked who are gone before us. Idolaters, and evil-doers, are strengthened in their wicked way by this, that it was the way of their fathers. *We will do as we have done; we and our fathers.*[h] *A vain conversation is received by tradition from their fathers.*[i] For which reason it is, that the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children. And shall not we be much more confirmed in the ways of God, from the practice and resolution of our fathers; whose covenant was, that not they only, *but their houses, would serve the Lord?* Though that which is bad is never the better, yet I am sure, that which is good is never the worse, but the more inviting, for its being received from our ancestors. Let us not therefore be weary in well-doing, but always abide, and always abound, in the work of the Lord.

3. Baptism, especially infant baptism, is to be improved by us, as a strong inducement to repent of sin.

As we should improve our baptism to prevent our fall; so, when we are fallen, we should improve it to help us up again. Repentance is (as far as possible) the unsaying, and the undoing, of that which we have said and done amiss. It is a retraction. The law of repentance is a remedial law; a plank thrown out after shipwreck: and blessed be God, that the covenant of grace leaves room for repentance: the covenant of works did not.

In repentance, we should improve,

1. Our baptism. And we shall find in it,

(1.) A strong engagement to repent, in our part of the covenant.

John's baptism, which made way for Christ's, was *the baptism of repentance.*[k] The apostles were sent to preach *repentance*, and to *that* baptism was annexed; *Repent, and be baptized.*[l] Our baptism engageth us, not only to the first repentance from dead works, but to an after repentance, as there is occasion. Our first washing in the laver of baptism, obligeth us every day *to wash our feet*[m] from the pollutions we contract. Our covenant was, not to sin; but if we should sin, to repent. Impenitency is the most direct falsifying of our baptismal covenant that can be; it is against the prescribed method of cure.

(2.) A sweet encouragement to repent, in God's part of the covenant.

In this covenant both parties are engaged, God to us, and we to God. We have obliged ourselves (as in duty bound) to repent; God has been pleased to oblige himself (as in grace and mercy inclined) to forgive upon repentance. So that baptism is a continued seal of our pardon upon repentance: an assurance, that if we be truly sorry for what we have done, and will come and confess it, and do so no more, all shall be well; iniquity shall not be our ruin. *Repent, and be ye baptized, for the remission of sins:*[n] not for the purchase of remission; that is Christ's work, and was done before, when the *everlasting righteousness was brought in;* but for the possession and application of it, which are daily needed. *Let us therefore draw near with boldness, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*[o] Baptismal washing, as it assures us of the pardon of sin upon repentance, purgeth us from an evil conscience. *Repent therefore, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;*[p] i. e. the gospel dispensation, the promise of pardon upon repentance. While the hue and cry is out against the malefactor, he flies, but the proclamation of pardon brings him in. This *kingdom of God is come nigh unto us;* it was in baptism applied to us in particular, that the encouragement might be past dispute.

f Hos. xi. 1. g Exod. xv. 2. h Jer. xliv. 17.
i 1 Pet. i. 18. k Luke iii 3.
l Acts ii. 38. m John xiii. 10. n Acts ii. 38.
o Heb. x. 22. p Matt. iv. 17.

2. Our infant baptism.

There is much in the consideration of our baptism as administered in infancy, to strengthen this inducement to repent. Can I do otherwise than melt into tears of godly sorrow, when I reflect that I was baptized in infancy? For if so, then,

(1.) By sin I have ill requited God's early kindness to me. I have offended my God, and the God of my fathers, who, upon my parents' account, dealt so favourably with me. It is often mentioned, as an aggravation of sin, that it is against the God of our fathers: thus, 2 Chron. vii. 22. *Because they have forsaken the God of their fathers;* so, 2 Chron. xxviii. 6. God hath been kind to my family, to my ancestors before me; how sinful then must my sin needs be, which hath put an affront upon such a friend? besides that I was then taken into covenant with God myself, and owned in a covenant relation. God aggravates the sin of Israel, from the consideration of his early kindness to them, Ezek. xvi. 8, &c. especially his early covenant with them. *Loved when a child, and yet revolting, and dealing treacherously!*[q] When we were polluted, and exposed, then regarded, pitied, taken up, washed, adorned, taken into covenant, adopted into a good family; and was not that a time of love? love sealed, love ensured, preventing love, unmerited love? What! and yet despise such rich love, spurn at such bowels? *Do ye thus requite the Lord?*[r] *Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* How should we charge this home upon our souls in our repentance, and blush for our ingratitude! *Nourished, and brought up, and yet rebelling!*[s]

(2.) By sin I have falsified my early engagements to him. Born in his house, brought up in his family, brought betimes under his law, and yet shaking off the yoke, and bursting the bonds! Did God take me into covenant with himself, when I was a child, and look upon me ever since as a covenanter; and yet, no sooner have I been able to go, than I have gone from him? to speak, than I have spoken to his dishonour? Aggravate sin from this topic; that there hath been in it, not only such base ingratitude, but such horrid perjury. This consideration is especially seasonable, when we are made to *possess the iniquities of our youth;*[t] and are praying with David, *O remember not those early sins.*[u] Those who are not baptized till years of discretion, have no such considerations to humble them for the sinful vanities of childhood and youth, as they have who were baptized in their infancy. Let this therefore break our hearts for the sins of our youth, that they were violations of our infant covenant; than which how can there be greater disingenuity?

4. We are to improve our baptism, especially our infant baptism, as a great support to our faith.

Unbelief is the sin that doth *most easily beset us*: there are remainders of it in the best; and it is at the bottom of our many sinful *departures from God.*[v] Even those who can say, *Lord, I believe*, have reason to add, *help my unbelief.*[w] Now, I say, it would be a special help against unbelief, to consider our baptism, especially our infant baptism.

1. Our baptism.

When we are tempted to distrust God, to question his good-will, and to think hardly of him, then let us recollect the covenant of grace, and our baptism, the seal thereof. Consider,

(1.) That by baptism we were admitted into covenant relations. God did then make over himself to us, to be our God; and take us to himself, to be his people; and shall we then ever distrust him? Relation is a great encouragement to dependence. See Ps. xxi. 2. *My refuge, my fortress, my God*, and then follows, *in him will I trust;* compare Ps. xviii. 2. As, by baptism, God hath hold of us when we depart from him, so, by baptism, we have hold of God when he seems to withdraw from us. It is an excellent support to faith, when we walk in darkness, and have no light, that we may stay ourselves upon *our God;*[x] *ours* in covenant; ours, for he hath made himself over to us to be our God. Be not *dismayed* then, for he is *thy God.*[y] Use this as an anchor of the soul in every storm; and whatever happens, keep hold of thy covenant relation to God: even then, when he seems to forsake, yet (as Christ upon the cross) maintain this post against all the assaults of Satan, that he is *my God; my God* for all this; and happy the people whose God is the Lord.

(2.) That by baptism we were interested in the promises of the covenant.

To visible church members now, as formerly, pertain the *covenants, and the promises;*[z] to which others are *strangers.*[a] When the evil heart of unbelief is doubting our immediate interest in the promises, faith may fetch in strength from the remoter interest; *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant;*[b] and that covenant, *ordered in all things, and sure.*

2. Our infant baptism. There is much in that to add to the encouragement; and to strengthen this prop, which faith finds in baptism to lean upon. Baptism seals the promise of God's being to me a God, and that is greatly encouraging; but infant baptism increaseth the encouragement, as it assures me of God's being the God of my fathers, and the God of my infancy.

(1.) The God of my fathers.

Shall I question the kindness of one who is my own friend, and my father's friend? the faithfulness of one, who was in covenant with my fathers, and always true to them? As it is an inducement to me to

q Hos. xi. 1—3. r Deut. xxxii. 6. s Isa. i. 2, 3.
t Job xiii. 26. u Ps. xxv. 7. v Heb. iii. 12.
w Mark ix. 24. x Isa. l. 10. y Isa. xli. 10.
z Rom. ix. 4. a Eph. ii. 12. b 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

choose God to be my God, because he was my fathers' God; so having chosen him, it must be very pleasing to reflect upon that hereditary covenant. Nay, when our own interest may be clouded, and eclipsed, it may bring some support and revival to the soul, to think of our fathers' interest. Peter mentions it as a great inducement to his hearers to believe, *Ye are the children of the covenant which God made with our fathers*, Acts iii. 25. God himself invites us to take hold of this, by fetching his reasons of mercy to his people from the covenant made with their fathers, (Lev. xxvi. 42.) *Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob*, &c. *The seed of Abraham his friend*[c] must not be forsaken, cannot be forgotten. In the great work of our redemption, respect was had *unto the promise made unto our fathers.*[d] Infant baptism, in the parents' right, speaks covenant mercy *kept for thousands; the word commanded to a thousand generations*; which, if seriously considered, hath a great deal in it to encourage faith. The saints have often been kept from sinking by this thought, *O Lord God of our fathers;*[e] *our fathers trusted in thee.*[f]

(2.) The God of my infancy.

It is a great support to faith, to consider, not only that God is my God, but that he was so betimes. How favourable was he in the admission, to accept of me upon my father's interest! He who took me when I was brought, surely will not cast me off when I come myself, though weak, and trembling, and unworthy. He who called me his own, because I was born in his house, though I was then too little to serve him; who then washed me, and clothed me, and entered into covenant with me, surely will not now reject and disown me, though I am still weak, and what I do is next to nothing. Preventing mercies are not only in themselves very obliging, but very encouraging to hope, in reference to further mercy: he who began in ways of love and mercy to me so early, will not now be wanting to me, or backward to do me good. See how David strengthens his faith from hence, (Ps. lxxv. 5, 6.) *Thou art my trust from my youth, by thee I have been holden up from the womb.* Loving-kindnesses, which have been *ever of old*, must needs be very favourable to faith and hope. God *remembers the days of old*,[g] and we should remember those days.

5. We should improve our baptism, especially our infant baptism, as a special friend to prayer. God's people are, and should be, a praying people: *For this shall every one that is godly pray*, Ps. lxxii. 6. It is a duty to which we are naturally very backward; sinners plead the unprofitableness of it, *(What profit shall we have if we pray unto him?*[h]*)* but sensible souls are convinced, not only of the *profit*, but of the *necessity*, of it; not only that there is something to be gained by it, but that really there is no living without it. Prayer is the very breath of the new creature. Now, a due improvement of our baptism would greatly befriend us in this duty.

1. The consideration of our *baptism* would be of excellent use,

(1.) To bring us to the duty.

Baptism did signify and seal our dependence upon God, and our submission to him; both of which are in effect denied, and contradicted, if we live without prayer; either wholly neglect it, or frequently intermit it. *Restraining prayer*, is *casting off* that *fear* of God,[i] which, in baptism, we assumed. In baptism, we took God for our God; and *should not a people seek unto their God?*[k] natural light teacheth us to attend upon, with our prayers, that Being whom we call and own as a God.* Baptism put us into the relation of a people to God; which, while we live in the neglect of prayer, we refuse to stand to, and so forfeit its privileges. When we find our hearts backward to prayer; indifferent whether we pray or not, or degenerating into a lifeless formality, let us quicken them with this: Shall I give the lie to my baptism, and disown dependence upon that God, who then manifested such kindness? and whose I am by so solemn a covenant David often excites praying graces by similar means; *Thou art my God, early will I seek thee.*[l] Baptism is particularly an engagement to family worship: by that, we and ours were taken into covenant with God; therefore, *we and our households should serve the Lord.*[m]

(2.) To imbolden us in the duty.

Slavish fear is a great enemy to prayer: takes off our chariot wheels; clips the wings of devotion. Baptism, if duly considered, will be a special remedy against that spirit of bondage, which stands in opposition to the spirit of adoption. It is a seal of our interest in God; and we may from thence, with the greater confidence, call God ours: and it is comfortable coming with an address to one in whom we have such an interest; one who is not *ashamed*[n] of his relation to us; but hath instituted an ordinance for the solemn avowal and recognizance of it. *Let us therefore come boldly;*[o] *draw near with a true heart, having our bodies washed.*[p] Baptism is one special qualification that fits us for a confident approach to God: (as circumcision under the law:) by that, we were admitted into the relation of children, which should encourage us to improve the relation, by crying, *Abba, Father.*[q] We were then enrolled among the seed of Jacob, to whom God never said, *Seek ye me in vain.*[r] We were interested in the Mediator, who ever lives to make

c Isa. xli. 8. d Luke i. 72, 73. e 2 Chron. xx. 6.
f Ps. xxii. 4. g Isa. lxiii. 13
h Job xxii. 15. i Job xv. 4. k Isa. viii. 14.

* *Deos qui rogat, ille facit.*
l Ps. lxiii. 1.
m Josh xxiv. 14. n Heb. xi. 16. o Heb. iv. 26.
p Heb. x. 22. q Gal. iv. 6. r Isa. xlv. 19.

intercession, for we were baptized into his name. We may plead the promise of the Spirit's assistance, God's acceptance, and an answer of peace: and may we not then come with boldness? In prayer we stand in need of the Father's smiles, the Son's righteousness, and the Spirit's aid; in reference to each of which, we should consider, that we were baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Baptism is especially encouraging in reference to our joint addresses; our approaches to God in the solemn assemblies of his people. Our participation of the privileges of the communion of saints, should encourage us to abound in the duties of that communion. We belong to the praying body; and our spiritual communion with that body in prayers and praises, (even with those with whom we cannot maintain a local communion,) is very comfortable, when we approach the throne of grace. To think, that that mystical body, into which we were baptized, is attending the same throne of grace, upon the same errands. Let this therefore lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees. But further,

2. The consideration of our *baptism, as administered in infancy*, will much more befriend prayer; both as an inducement to, and an encouragement in, that duty. Three comfortable inferences may be drawn from it, viz.

(1.) That God is ready to receive those who come to him, and will in no wise cast them out.

He who would have little children come to him, *infants*, such as cannot speak for themselves, surely will not reject and put away those, who, though still very weak, yet do, in some measure, lisp out their desires to him. Infant baptism discovers the goodness of God to be, preventing goodness, unmerited goodness, free in the communication of itself, and not strict in standing upon terms. Hard thoughts of God drive us *from*, and discourage us *in*, the duty of prayer; and are no less uncomfortable to ourselves, than they are dishonourable to God. Now, the serious consideration of the favours of our infant baptism, would cause the goodness of God to pass before us; and very much endear our Master, and his service, to us. And this would bring us with cheerfulness, and boldness, to the throne of grace, to ask, and receive, mercy and help.

(2.) That we were early brought into covenant with him; were betimes received into the number, and entitled to the privileges of children; which is a great engagement upon us to adhere to God, and a great encouragement to us to hope, that God will not forsake us. It is a good plea in prayer, (see how comfortably David pleads it, Ps. xxii. 9—11.) *Thou art he that took me out of the womb*; (and immediately into covenant;) *thou didst make me hope* (though incapable of the act of hope, didst lay a foundation for hope to build upon) *when I was upon my mother's breasts: thou art my God*, for *I was cast upon thee* (by my parents' dedication of me) *from the womb*; therefore, *be not far from me*. He pleads to the same purpose when old, (Ps. lxxi. 5. compare v. 17, 18.) for time doth not wear out the comfort of our infant covenants. How careful was God to get possession of us betimes! and can we find in our hearts now to cast him off? or can we fear that he should cast us off?

(3.) That he was our fathers' God.

That we may with comfort take hold of, in the darkest seasons. Thus the saints of old used to do:[s] though they might have said, *my God*, they chose rather to insist upon the covenant relation of their parents. David presseth this in his plea for salvation, (Ps. lxxxvi. 16.) *Save the son of thy handmaid*; born in thy house, therefore obliged to serve thee, and therefore expecting to be saved by thee. We find God often showing kindness, as David to Mephibosheth, for the father's sake; which, perhaps, is therefore called the *kindness of God*;[t] such kindness as God was used to show, hereditary kindness. Plead then (as Asa with Benhadad) an ancient league between God and thy father; and take encouragement from thence.

Thus may we order our cause before God, and fill our mouths with arguments; not to move God, (for he is of one mind, and who can turn him?) but to move ourselves; to strengthen our faith, and to quicken our fervency.

6. We should improve our baptism, especially our infant baptism, as a powerful engagement to brotherly love.

This is the *new commandment*; though an old commandment, enforced by new motives, built upon a new foundation. It is peculiarly the law of Christ's kingdom, the lesson of his school, the livery of his family; an essential branch of our holy and excellent religion. Now there is that in baptism, which should mightily induce us to love one another with a pure heart, fervently: and would (if used aright) eradicate all love-killing principles and practices; and overcome all our feuds and animosities; and readily and powerfully suggest, to all Christians, that necessary caution, *See that ye fall not out by the way*.

1. The consideration of our *baptism* would be a great inducement to brotherly love.

(1.) The oneness of our baptism. It is the apostle's argument for *unity of spirit*, that there is *one baptism*. As there is one faith, so there is one way of professing and owning that faith, viz. baptism: the common door of admission into the visible

[s] 1 Chron. xii. 17. 2 Chron. xx. 6.

[t] 2 Sam. ix. 7.

[u] Eph. iv. 3, 5.

urch. Those who, in lesser things, differ in their prehensions, and are accordingly subdivided, yet this agree, that they are baptized into the same eat names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. 'hatever dividing names we are known by, whe- er of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, whether of uther, or Calvin, or the Church of England, we ere not baptized into those names; (the great apos- e disowns it, 1 Cor. i. 13. *Were ye baptized in the ime of Paul?)* no, we were baptized in the name the Lord Jesus, who hath instituted this ordi- ance, as a centre of unity to all Christians. The ith professed in baptism is a *common faith*;[v] (that which all Christians are agreed; abstracted from ll controverted opinions of lesser moment;) of hich, what is commonly called the Apostle's Creed ay be considered as a summary. Our Lord Jesus, n baptism, received us, not to *doubtful disputations*;[w] herefore we should so receive one another. All Christians who are duly baptized, however differing n other things, are interested in one and the same ovenant, guided by one and the same rule, meet at ne and the same throne of grace, are entitled to one nd the same inheritance, and all this by one and the same baptism: and should they not then love one another, since the things wherein they agree are so many and so great, while the things wherein they differ are, comparatively, so few, at least, so small? How should this shame us out of our pri- vate piques and quarrels, distances and estrange- ments, that our Lord Jesus has not only put up a prayer, but instituted such an ordinance, *that we all might be one?*[x] As for those who enervate the force of this argument, and evade it, by appropriating baptism (like the Donatists of old) to their own way, whatever the monopolizing, excluding principle be, on the one hand or on the other, let not my soul come into their secret, unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united. To unchurch, unchris- tianize, unbaptize, all those who are not in every thing of our length, is a project so dishonourable to Christ, so destructive to the catholic church, and so directly opposite to the spirit of the gospel, that I cannot mention it without expressing my abhorrence of it. The Lord preserve his church from the mis- chievous consequences of pride and bigotry.

(2.) The operation of our baptism.

Though baptism doth not always produce a real change, yet it doth always effect a relative change: so that those who are duly baptized, are thereby admitted members of the visible church, and there- fore stand in a near relation to all the members of it: for *by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles.*[y] By baptism we are all admitted into the family and kingdom of Jesus Christ, and so become related to one another, yea, are adopted to be the children of the same Father. All the saints, both in heaven and earth, make but one *family*, and that *named from Christ*,[z] the head of it, to whom they are all united. *Have we not all one Father?*[a] from whence it follows, *that all we are brethren.*[b] Now relation is a great inducement to love and affection: if we are brethren, we should love as brethren. No strife, *for we are brethren.*[c] It would be very unnatural for the children of the same father to fall out, and fight, because they are not all of the same stature, strength, or complexion. Baptized Christians are *members one of another*;[d] and it is very unbecoming, if there be not that love and sympathy among them, which there is between the members of the natural body. Though the members have not all the same place, strength, comeliness, and use in the body, yet they love one another, and have a concern one for another, because it is the same soul which actuates, and animates, and permeates, every member of the body; and should it not be so in the mystical body, forasmuch as we are *members in particular*, and have *need one of another?*[e] For though there be a *diversity of operations, and gifts, and administrations*, yet there is but one *spirit*,[f] which actuates all the members. For this reason, the strong must not despise the weak, nor the weak judge the strong. This should enlarge and extend our love to all Christians, how- ever distinguished, dignified, or vilified.

(3.) The obligation of our baptism.

It binds us to obey: and this is the second great commandment to which we are to yield obedience, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:* and this, re- vived and confirmed by our Saviour, so often repeat- ed, so much inculcated, so strongly ratified, and enforced by so many pressing motives and argu- ments, that we have precept upon precept, line upon line, to this purpose. Now our baptism is a bond upon our souls, *to walk according to this rule.* That which doth so richly assure us of God's love to us, doth, no doubt, firmly engage us to love one another. Envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, are some of those devilish lusts, which in our baptism we renounced, and engaged to fight against. Shall we then harbour and embrace them? or be led, and actuated, and governed by them? It is the apostle's argument, (Col. iii. 8—10.) *Put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, seeing you have* (at least in profession and engagement) *put off the old man, and put on the new man.*

2. The consideration of our baptism, *as administered in infancy*, would very much strengthen the inducement to brotherly love.

(1.) As it is a signal discovery of God's love to us; preventing love, unmerited love.

If he loved us when we were infants, and had

v Tit. i. 4. w Rom. xiv. 1. x John xvii. 21.
y 1 Cor. xii. 13. z Eph. iii. 15. a Mal. ii. 10.
b Matt. xxiii. 8. c Gen. xiii. 8. d Eph. iv. 25.
e 1 Cor. xii. 25—27. f 1 Cor. xii. 4—6.

nothing in us to induce or encourage love, what can we object against loving our brother? The beloved disciple; who had leaned on Jesus' breast, was most loving himself, and did most press love upon others. The more sensible we are of God's love to us, the more will our hearts be drawn out in love to our brethren. All acceptable love in us is but the reflex of God's love to us. Are you to seek for proofs of the love of God to you? as they, Mal. i. 2. *Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?* Reflect upon your infant baptism, and you will see wherein: that was a time of love indeed; the love of espousals; and should not we then love one another, with a pure heart, fervently.

(2.) As it puts us into an *early* relation one to another.

Those relations which take rise with our birth, and into which we are led by nature itself, have usually the greatest influence, and lay the strongest ties upon us. Such is this. We are brethren from our infancy; were born in the same house; and having the same birth-right privileges, being interested in the same happiness and hopes, let us not fall out by the way. Especially, considering what was our state when we were put into that relation: we were *little children*, and therefore, *in malice, should be such still.*[g] Our infant baptism should teach us to *receive the kingdom of God as little children*;[h] with all humility, and lowliness of mind; which is a temper that would mightily promote our brotherly love. The consideration of our infant baptism would help to make us like *little children*;[i] peaceable and loving in all our carriage; plain and open, without design, or study of revenge.

Other particulars might be mentioned, wherein our baptism, our *infant baptism*, may be improved by us, to promote our comfort and holiness, and to build us up in our most holy faith; but these shall suffice.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### DIRECTIONS TO PARENTS, CONCERNING THE BAPTISM OF THEIR CHILDREN.

NEXT to our own baptism, and the improvement of that, our concern is about our children's baptism; for they are parts of ourselves, and God and nature have constituted us feoffees, in trust for them, to act for their good, in their behalf. And I fear that much of the contempt which infant baptism is brought under with some, is owing to the ignorance, neglect, and mismanagement, which parents are guilty of in that matter; and nothing would be more effectual to revive and preserve the honour of it, than parents conscientious and serious discharge of their duty with reference to it; for they are the persons concerned, and their carelessness is an error in the first concoction. And therefore, *I write unto you, fathers.*[a] The relation of a father, by the consent of nations, as well as by the law of nature, hath authority and honour, belonging to it. There were several dignities, and privileges, conferred by the Roman government upon the father of three children. Children are *a heritage of the Lord;* happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them. Those who are not quite divested of natural affection, value them accordingly. They are (saith Jacob) *the children which God hath graciously given thy servant.*[b] When they are multiplied, they are not to be accounted burthens, but blessings: Obed-Edom had eight sons, *for the Lord blessed him.* Our duty is to take care of them; especially of their better part. One of the first things we have to do for them, is to dedicate them to God in baptism. And concerning that, we shall endeavour to direct you that are parents,

I. In your preparation for it.

II. In your management of it.

III. In your improvement of it afterwards, *in* reference to your children. For the

I. Preparation for it. I observe in general, that before this, as before other solemn ordinances, there ought to be due preparation; (as much as before the Lord's supper;) and yet ordinarily how little is there! The more seldom we have occasion to attend upon the Lord in this service, the more need we have to prepare for it with all seriousness. More particularly,

1. Get a right understanding of the ordinance, and of your own concern and interest in it.

There are many who bring their children to be baptized, only because it is the fashion of the country, and they would be strangely looked upon if they did not do it; but they know nothing of the meaning of this service. And if we thus offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? Give diligence therefore, clearly and distinctly to understand what you do, and why you do it.

1. What you do.

You give up your children (which are parts of yourselves) to God. It is a peculiar interest which parents have in their children; founded upon the highest law, and the greatest love: it is undisputed, natural, and unalienable. Know then, that by virtue of this interest, you have a power to dispose of them, for their good, and God's glory. You do therefore accordingly give them up to God; and transfer all your right and title to them, and all your interest in them, to him, according to the tenor of the covenant. You resign them to God, to be taught,

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g 1 Cor. xiv. 20. h Mark x. 15. i Matt. xviii. 3.

a John ii. 13, 14. b Gen. xxxiii. 5.

l ruled, and disposed of, and portioned by him; be made holy and happy by him. You bring them be laid at the feet of the Lord Jesus. Under- nd farther,

1.) That you do hereby oblige your *children;* id them to the Lord; to his word and to his law. much as in you lies, you lay an obligation upon m, *against* all sin, and *to* all duty. Not an ori- al, but an additional, bond. You bind them to a at deal; but to nothing to which they were not und before. You do in baptism, as when you set ur children apprentices; interposing your own thority to oblige them to the duties of the relation, m a sincere regard to their real advantage. And n you think this too much to do for God, who gave s Son, his only-begotten Son, for you? The Fa- er *sanctified his Son, and sent him into the world;* e. set him apart for the work of our redemption: id should not we then sanctify our children, and t them apart for God and his glory? Which may terwards operate, by a moral influence, as an ar- ument with themselves (and all little enough) to fix em to God and duty.

(2.) You do hereby oblige *yourselves* to bring them p accordingly; in the nurture and admonition of e Lord. It is a great charge, which parents take pon themselves, when they bring their children to e baptized; and I fear the reason why so few per- rm it, is because they do so little understand and onsider it. This obligation upon *you* also, is indeed no more than you were before bound to, though it oth more bind you, and strengthen the natural obli- ation. Labour to understand this. In dealing with en, you would not put your hand to a bond, with- ut knowing first what it meant, and what you took pon yourselves by it; and will you, in dealing with od, do such a thing rashly and inconsiderately?

2. Why you do it.

Understand upon what grounds you go, in bring- ng your children to baptism; else it is not in faith. have endeavoured, at large, to show what Scrip- ure grounds we go upon in baptizing children: un- lerstand them well. In short, (1.) You do it in ompliance with the tenor of the covenant; which uns, *to us and to our children*, that God will be *a God to us and to our seed.* (2.) You do it, in con- ormity to the will of God revealed in the Old-Testa- ment administration of the covenant; in that which was not ceremonial, viz. the admission of the chil- dren of the covenanters into the same covenant with their parents. (3.) You do it in obedience to the appointment of Christ; that *little children should be brought unto him.*[c] (4.) You do it in pursuance of your own covenant with God; wherein you gave up yourselves, and all near and dear to you, unto him; your children therefore especially, who are in a manner parts of yourselves. (5.) You do it out of a natural affection to your children; which prompts you to do all you can for their good. La- bour thus to understand yourselves, and act with reason in what you do.

2. Be serious in examining yourselves, and your own covenant interest in God.

What title your children have to the ordinance, they have *by descent* from you: and there appears no reason to expect, that the streams should rise higher than the spring; that you should convey to your children a higher and greater title than you have yourselves. Therefore examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith; for though your profession of faith (in nothing visibly contradicted) be sufficient, so far as the church can decide, to entitle your chil- dren to this ordinance, yet God is not to be mocked; he searcheth the heart, and will not be put off with shows and pretences; he knoweth where the heart *is not right*, but *unsteady in the* covenant. Therefore we should diligently commune with our own hearts in this matter, and take heed of deceiving ourselves. It is a thing in which multitudes are mistaken, and in which a mistake is extremely fatal. Therefore ask, *Is there not a lie in my right hand?* When we bring our children to be *ingrafted into Christ*, we should inquire, Am I myself ingrafted into him? Am I alive indeed, or have I only *a name to live?* Take this opportunity of driving the matter to an issue. Such a shaking of the tree, if it be indeed well rooted, will but make it take root the stronger.

3. Renew your repentance for the breach of your baptismal engagements.

Upon every renewal of our covenant with God, we should penitently reflect upon our violations of it: especially when, in effect, renewing that baptism which is the baptism of repentance. Those whom John baptized confessed their sins; and so should they who bring their children to be baptized. It is well the covenant we are under leaves room for re- pentance.

4. Be earnest with God in prayer, for a blessing upon his own ordinance.

The blessing of God is all in all to the comfort and benefit of it. Pray that the ordinance may be made effectual to the child, and not be an empty sign. How grace is wrought in the hearts of infants we know not: how should we, when the production of it in the adult is such a mystery? like the wind, which we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: it is like the forming of the bones in the womb of her that is with child. But this we know, that the God of the spirits of all flesh hath access to the souls of little infants, and can make them meet for heaven: and from thence we should take encou- ragement in our prayers for them. God is not tied

[c] Mark x. 14.

to means, for he needs them not; but we may, with more confidence, expect his manifestations of himself when we are in the use of the means. Pray then that God would grace his own ordinance with his special presence, and accept the dedication of the child to him. This is a promised mercy, but yet for this God will be sought unto, and *inquired of by the house of Israel.*

What I say to one I say to both the parents. The mother must consent to the dedication of the child, as well as the father, though commonly it is the father who makes the profession; and they should both together discourse before of these things, as *heirs together of the grace of life.*[d] They are generally both contriving about the outside, and the formality of the service; they would do well to help one another in the main matter. The dedication of Samuel[e] was his mother's act and deed; and David often pleads a relation to God as the son of his handmaid. The mothers, from the conception, should look upon the fruit of their bodies as belonging to God; and, in intention, devote it accordingly. It may minister some comfort and relief to a pious mother, in breeding-sicknesses, and bearing-pains, that they are in order to bring another member into Christ's visible body; and who would not encounter some difficulties to bear a child to the Lord? It was the peculiar honour of Mary, that she was the mother of Christ: and is not some ray of that honour put upon those who are the mothers of Christians? Is it not *a holy thing which shall be born of thee*, and that shall be called a child of God? This, indeed, was said of Christ, (Luke i. 35.) but it may, in some sense, be said of Christians. Be not cast down then, or disquieted; *blessed shall be the fruit of thy body.*[f] It is the Lord's, and God will look after his own. You should take care accordingly to preserve it, and to keep yourselves pure. Every Christian is a spiritual Nazarite; and if Samson must be *a Nazarite from the womb*, his mother must *eat no unclean thing.*[g] Do nothing to destroy, or defile, that temple of God which is in the rearing. Have an eye to this, in your provision for your children, as soon as they come into the world. When the knees prevent them, and the breasts which they suck, say, This care I take of them, that they may be given up to the Lord. Nurse them for him. This would sanctify natural affection, and make those common cares peculiarly pleasing to God, and first abounding to a good account. While you love your children, and take care of them, and provide for them, and nurse them, (which those that are able ought to do,) only because they are your own offspring, what do ye more than others? more than even the brute creatures? But to do this with an eye to God, to take care of them as born in his house, children of the covenant, who belong to Christ's family; this is to do it *after a godly sort*, and as *becomes the gospel.* Where special privileges are enjoyed, even in common actions, there ought to be a special regard to those privileges.

II. As to the management of the ordinance when it comes, I would direct you,

1. As to the externals of it.

Be prudent in ordering the circumstances (so far as they fall within your management) in such a manner, as that the great ends of the institution may be promoted, and not hindered. For time, and place, we gave directions before. In general, consult the solemnity of an ordinance, and let it be managed with an agreeable seriousness. We see too commonly, that inviting and treating the guests is made the main matter at a christening, as they call it. All the care is to please their neighbours, while there is but little thought how to please God in it.

I condemn not the inviting of friends (Christian friends) on such an occasion, provided the ends be right: not to make *a fair show in the flesh*, but that our friends may be witnesses of our covenanting with God for our seed, and may join with us in prayer for a blessing upon the ordinance. When John was circumcised, Elizabeth had her neighbours and cousins with her, Luke i. 58, 59. And this may be a mean to preserve, and increase, that love which there should be amongst neighbours and relatives, and to knit families together.

Nor do I altogether condemn such moderate expressions of rejoicing, as do become Christians, and are consistent with the seriousness of the institution. But how rarely are they so regulated! Abraham made a great feast, not when Isaac was circumcised, but when he was *weaned*, Gen. xxi. 8. How prejudicial such entertainments usually are, not only to the health of the mother, but to the efficacy of the ordinance, is too evident. Meetings of friends upon that occasion, should be to edify, not to insnare, one another. And yet how often do we see one of the great institutions of the gospel managed much like the idolatrous worship of the golden calf, when, after a piece of blind devotion, *the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play:* thus gratifying that flesh which in baptism we renounce. Fashion is commonly pleaded as an excuse in this case: a poor excuse for a Christian. What is Christianity but a sober singularity? a non-conformity to this present world? We must inquire, what is right, not what is fashion; what is the way of Christ, not what is the way of the world.

Particular rules cannot here be given with any certainty, so as to fit all persons, places, and circumstances; only, in general, let not the *shadow* eat out the substance, nor the beauty of the ordi-

[d] 1 Pet. iv. 7. [e] 1 Sam. i. 11. [f] Deut. xxviii. 4. [g] Judg. xiii. 7.

nce be eclipsed by the pomp and gaiety of the ıst.

2. As to the frame of your spirits, (which is the ıin matter, and what God especially looks at,) take ɜse directions:

1. Do what you do, uprightly, and sincerely. That good man was much in the right, who pro-ısed, *that he knew no religion but sincerity*. It is the ime condition of the new covenant; and our great ivilege, and that wherein the covenant of grace is ell ordered, that sincerity is our gospel perfection, ien. xvii. 1.) *Walk before me, and be thou perfect:* e. upright in the main matter of covenanting with od; sincere in the closing, consenting act, how-er, in many things, thou mayst come short.

(1.) Be upright in dedicating yourselves to God. ean what you say, when you say you will be the ord's. It is the comfort of all those who are ıraelites indeed, that they are able to say, through race, that though they have many ways dealt *foolhly* in the covenant, yet they *have not dealt falsely ı the covenant.*[r] Take heed of that. Allowed guile ı our federal transactions is the radical hypocrisy. le not deceived, God is not mocked. We may ossibly deceive one another, but God is too wise ɔ be imposed upon. If we think to put a cheat pon him, we shall prove in the end to have put the ɔrst cheat upon our own souls. Dread the thought f lying to the God of truth; as they did, (Ps. lxxviii. 6, 37.) who only *flattered him with their tongues, for heir heart was not right with him.* Let there be no eserve for any known sin; no exception of any ıouse of Rimmon: such a proviso would be the ɔverthrow and defeasance of the deed.

(2.) Be upright in the dedication of your children ɔ God.

You say they shall be the Lord's; but are you in ɡood earnest? and do you mean as you say? Do you really intend your children to be taught, and ruled, and disposed of, and provided for, by the Lord Jesus? and this, with a single eye to the will of God as your rule, and the glory of God as your end?

You should examine your own souls, whether you are thus cordial and sincere, or not. He that is not sincere in covenanting for himself, can never be right hearty in covenanting for his children. And who knows what a wrong your hypocrisy may prove to your poor infants?

2. Do it in faith; especially faith in the great Mediator.

When Hannah came to dedicate her son Samuel to God, she brought a sacrifice, 1 Sam. i. 24, 25. Christ is the great sacrifice, in the virtue and value of which we must present ourselves and ours to God.

3. Do it thankfully.

It is our duty, in every thing, to give thanks; especially in such a thing as this, which is so very much to our comfort and advantage.

(1.) Bless God for your covenant interest; that God is, and will be, to you a God: and take this occasion to speak of it to his praise. Wonder at his condescending goodness. Whence is this to me, a worthless worm of the earth? So mean, so vile, and yet taken into covenant with God! interested in the Lord of glory; his attributes, his promises! *Who am I, O Lord God?*[s] That God should take any notice of me, should show me any token for good, is wonderful, considering how undeserving, how ill-deserving, I am; but that he should communicate his favours in a covenant way, interpose himself for security, make himself a debtor to his own truth, is such a paradox of love, as challengeth everlasting wonder and praise. That I should be made a friend and favourite, while so many continue *aliens and strangers to the covenant of promise! be astonished, O heavens, at this! Lord, how is it, that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?*[t] A heart to be duly thankful to God for the covenant of grace, is a good evidence of our interest in it. Upon this occasion, take a view of covenant privileges: observe how well ordered and how sure the covenant is; what you have in hope, and what you have in hand, by virtue of it; and let all this draw out your hearts in love and thankfulness. Trace up the streams of all your mercies to the inexhaustible spring; and let this be the burthen of every song of praise, *to perform the mercy promised, and to remember his holy covenant.*[u]

(2.) Bless God that the covenant of grace is so ordered, that not you only, but your offspring, are taken into that covenant: that God will be *a God*, not *to you* only, but *to your seed*,[v] and so entail his kindness, by a covenant commanded to a thousand generations. Thus richly doth free grace outdo all expectation. *I had not thought to see thy face*, (saith dying Jacob to his son Joseph,) *and lo, God hath showed me also thy seed.*[w] That God should signify his good will to us, is very wonderful; but lo, *as if this had been a small matter, he hath spoken concerning his servants' house, for a great while to come; and is this the manner of men, O Lord God?*[x] Admire the condescension of divine grace herein. Many great men think it beneath them to take notice of children; but our Lord Jesus will have little children brought to him, and by no means forbidden. Mention this to the glory of God's wisdom and goodness, and never forget this instance of his loving-kindness.

(3.) Bless God that you have a child to dedicate to him.

Much of the mercy of having children lies in

r Ps. xliv. 17. s 2 Sam. vii. 18. t John xiv. 22. u Luke ii. 72.

v Gen. xvii. 7. w Gen. xlviii. 11. x 2 Sam. vii. 19.

this, that we have them to devote to God: not only a seed to be accounted to *us*, but *to be accounted to the Lord, for a generation*:[y] not only to honour us, and to bear up our names, but to honour God, and to bear up his name in the world. What is an estate, or office, good for, but to glorify God with it, and that we may have something to lay out, and use, for his honour? Bless God, that he hath not only given you a child, but that he hath invited and encouraged you to give it to him again, and is pleased to accept of it. Be thankful that you have a child admitted, from its birth, into the bosom of the church, and under the wings of the Divine Majesty. How sad were it *to bring forth children to the murderer!*[z] but how comfortable to bring forth children to the Saviour! Hannah had been long barren, and it was her great grief; at length God gave her a Samuel; but it doth not appear that his birth was so much the matter of her praise, as his dedication to the Lord. When she had brought him, in his infancy, to the tabernacle, then it was that she said, *My soul rejoiceth in the Lord.*[a] You have more reason to be thankful that you have a child born to inherit the privileges of the covenant, than if you had a child born to inherit the largest estate.

(4.) Bless God that you have opportunity, and a heart, thus to dedicate your child to God.

That he hath given you to see, and claim, and use your privilege; and hath appointed his ministers, by baptism, solemnly to invest the children you dedicate to God, in the benefits of the covenant. Bless God that he hath erected his tabernacle, and sanctuary, in the midst of us; and hath not left *himself* without witness, nor *us* without the means of grace and salvation. He hath not dealt so with many other nations; (they and theirs are afar off;) and should not this make us very thankful? Preventing mercies, distinguishing mercies, spiritual mercies, are in a special manner obliging. Rightly understand the nature and intention of the ordinance, and you will say, with wonder and praise, *This is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven: this gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter:* enter into it therefore with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise.

4. Do it sorrowing for the corruption of nature, which needs cleansing.

The appointment of infant baptism is an evidence of original sin: if little children were not polluted, they would not need to be washed; and consider, that they derive their pollution from you. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*[b] *They were shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin.*[c] It is so even with the children of pious parents; the natural corruption, not the supernatural grace, is propagated. Methinks this should be a melancholy thought to parents, that while they cannot communicate their graces to their offspring, they cannot but communicate their corruptions. Adam was himself made in the image of God; but when he was fallen, *he begat a son in his own likeness.*[d] And the same corrupt likeness is still conveyed. Little children, therefore, need this sacramental regeneration: upon occasion of which you, who are parents, should humbly reflect upon your own corruption, which kindled theirs. It should be matter of grief to you, that your children bear *your* iniquity; and may blame you for the conveyance of that root of bitterness, which bears so much sin and misery.

5. Do it, rejoicing in the covenant of grace, which provides cleansing.

Thus, at the laying of a stone in the gospel temple, as at the laying of the first stone of Zerubbabel's temple, there is occasion for a mixture of joy and sorrow: and that sorrow for sin is so far from obstructing, that really it befriends, this joy. Your children are polluted, but bless God that there is *a fountain opened;* not only *for the house of David*, but *for the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*[e] Draw water therefore with joy out of these *wells of salvation.* Rejoice that there is such a covenant, which you can through grace lay any claim to. The expressions of joy, and rejoicing, at the baptism of a child, should be turned into this channel; and should terminate in God, and in the new covenant.

Thus should you bring your children to baptism. And in order thereunto, it is requisite, in general, that you be very serious in it. It certainly is not a thing to be done rashly, and carelessly, but with great concern; and the more it lies out of the way of our usual meditations in other duties, the more need we have to engage all that is within us in this service. I come now,

III. To direct you what improvement to make of infant baptism, with reference to your children.

If you have not put off humanity, as well as Christianity, and divested yourselves of natural, as well as gracious, affections, you cannot but have a great concern for your children. I desire to adore the wisdom of God, in planting in the hearts of parents such love to their offspring. It is necessary to the preservation, both of the church, and of the world; and is therefore to be encouraged. It is the work of grace to improve, direct, and sanctify, natural affections. Christian parents, therefore, should do more and better than others, in their carriage towards their children.

I undertake not to direct, in general, to all the duties which parents owe to their children; but to instruct them how to improve the baptism of their children; in praying for them; in teaching them; in providing for them; and in parting with them: in

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y Ps. xxii. 30. z Hos. iv. 13. a 1 Sam. i. 28. and ii. 1.

b Job xiv. 4. c Ps. li. 5. d Gen. v. 3. e Zech. xiii 1.

all which we should make use of their baptism, for direction, quickening, and encouragement.

Parents should improve the baptism of their children,

1. In praying for them.

It is the duty of parents to pray for their children, and to bless them in the name of the Lord. Children's asking their parents' blessing, for aught I see, is a very laudable practice, provided it do not degenerate (as the best duties too often do) into formality. It is good to teach children betimes how to value their interest in the prayers of their pious parents. In praying for children, it is proper sometimes to be particular, as Job for his, (*ch.* i. 5.) *according to the number of them all.*

As to the improvement of their baptism in praying for them,

(1.) Take direction from their baptism, what to beg of God for them; viz. covenant mercies.

God's promises are to be the rule of our prayers: we should seek from God, what God hath sealed to us. Remember, when you are praying for your children, to mind their spiritual and eternal state, more than their temporal. They were covenant blessings, which Abraham's heart was so much upon, when he prayed, (Gen. xvii. 18.) *O that Ishmael might live before thee;* though God heard him for Isaac. Seek not great things in the world for your children; but be earnest with God to give them knowledge and grace; that good part; the best portion you can desire for them. Help them by your prayers, against their lusts and corruptions. You were accessary to their spiritual distempers, and therefore you should do what you can to get them cured; and what can you do better, than bring them to Christ, the great Physician, in the arms of faith and prayer? as that poor woman, (Matt. xv. 22.) whose daughter was vexed with a devil.

(2.) Take encouragement from their baptism in your prayers for them.

Look upon their baptism, and you will see upon what grounds you go in praying for them. You pray for them as in covenant with God, interested in the promises, sealed to be the Lord's; and those are good pleas in prayer, to be used for the confirmation of your faith. Pray that God would treat them as his; tell him, and humbly insist upon it, that they *are* his; whom you gave to him, and of whom he accepted: and will he not take care of his own? How far the promise of the new heart is sealed in baptism, I do not now inquire; but the sealing of the covenant in general, as a token of God's good will to our seed, as a sufficient handle for faith to take hold on, in praying for our children. I see not how those parents can, with equal confidence, pray for their children, who deny them to be in covenant, and so set them upon even ground with the children of infidels. Isaac and Jacob blessed their children *by faith,* (Heb. xi. 20, 21.) and that faith respected the covenant which God had made with them, and with their seed.

In praying for children, it is our duty to resign and give them up to God, to be disposed of as he pleaseth; with a holy resolution quietly to acquiesce in those disposals. Now it is very comfortable thus to give them up in prayer, when we have already given them up in baptism. Having submitted them to such an ordinance, we may, with comfort, submit them to any providence which God shall order for them. With great comfort may you give them up, to one who hath already received them, and set his own stamp and superscription upon them. It was said of Austin, who was so often prayed for by his pious mother Monica, that surely a child of so many prayers could not miscarry. If you be most earnest for spiritual blessings for your children, God will give an answer of peace, some way or other, some time or other. In all your blessings of them, (as in the blessing of Jacob,) let the *dew of heaven* [e] be put before *the fatness of earth;* and let the blessings of the *nether springs* be still postponed to those of the *upper.*

2. Parents should improve the baptism of their children in teaching them.

I take it for granted, that it is the duty of parents to teach their children. The very light of nature dictates this: and many heathens have left, not only good rules to this purpose, but good examples. But it is more clearly enjoined by the Scripture law. And there, the duty of parents is summed up in this, (Eph. vi. 4.) bring them *up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Take heed of the devil's nurture, rest not in the world's nurture, but let it be the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It was an Old-Testament precept, (Prov. xii. 6,) *Train up a child in the way he should go;* and this is equally a duty under the New Testament; and it may still be hoped that he will not afterwards *depart from it;* but that the well-seasoned vessel will retain the savour of life unto life. The first dispensation of the covenant, to the covenanters and their seed, that we have upon record, was to one who was famous for the religious education of children. *I know Abraham,* (saith God,) *that he will command his children and his household after him.*[f] And this was enjoined to the Jews, (Deut. vi. 7.) *Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.*

It is very disengenuous, and a perfect mockery, to dedicate your children to God, and then to breed them up for the flesh and for the world, and for the devil. See Ezek. xvi. 20.

Now, in reference to this, parents may two ways improve their baptism:

[e] Gen. xxvii. 28.

[f] Gen. xviii. 19.

(1.) As an argument with themselves to give them instruction.

Though this is so great and necessary a duty, yet how sadly is it neglected! Many, who are called Christians, are more solicitous to have their dogs taught, and their horses managed, than they are to have their children educated to the greatest advantage. Remember your dedication of them to God in baptism, as a motive to the utmost diligence in their education. Besides the tie of nature to do them all the good you can, especially to their better part, besides the command of God, which obligeth you to it, you have bound yourselves, by a solemn promise, in the presence of God. It was upon these terms that they were baptized; not only your profession of Christianity, but your promise to bring them up in that holy religion; and you break that promise if you neglect to do so. Your children are put out to you to be brought up for God. When God graciously gives a child to believing parents, he doth, in effect, say to them, as Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother of Moses, *Take this child, and nurse him for me*:[g] and if it be, indeed, done for God, *he will give thee thy wages*. Christian families are the church's nurseries, where the young plants are reared; and parents have, in a special manner, the charge of them; and must be called to account concerning that charge. But what a sad account will many parents have to give of this stewardship another day! who have not merely buried, but wasted this talent: who have not only neglected to improve their authority, and influence, for the good of their children's souls, but have abused both, to their unspeakable prejudice.

Besides the *promise* you break, and the *trust* you falsify, by your neglect of your children's education, consider likewise the *intention* you frustrate. You do, as much as in you lies, defeat the design of your children's baptism. It was to entitle them to church privileges: and to what purpose is that, if you do not teach them what use to make of those privileges? For want of educating your children aright, then, you receive the grace of God, manifested in their baptism, in vain.

Use their baptism as an argument with yourselves,

[1.] To begin teaching them betimes.

Children are capable of religious impressions sooner than we are commonly aware of; and it is good to season the vessel well at first. Even then, when the understanding is too weak fully to receive, and the memory to retain, truths and notions, the mind, by a prudent, pleasing management, may be formed to that which is good. Endeavour, by a reverend carriage in your religious exercises, and your sober deportment on the Lord's day, to possess them with an early apprehension that the worship of God is a serious thing. I think it is good to bring children betimes to the solemn assembly, where there is convenience for it; as soon as they are capable of being kept so quiet as not to give disturbance to others, (and with a little care and prudence they will quickly be brought to that,) though they are not able to understand what is said and done. My reasons are, that children may hereby be trained up to an observance of religion, and be ready to receive impressions as soon as ever they become capable. And there have been strange instances of the early notice which children have taken of good things. Besides, that the parents do hereby glorify God. And the Hosannas of even little children are not to be considered as a taking of the name of God in vain. Our Lord expressed his approbation of them.

The early dedication of our children to God, should excite us to an early care of them. If God's free grace was manifested to them, in such a preventing way, what an inducement should this be to us, to begin with them as soon as ever they are capable! They are therefore taken into the church so young, that (as we say) they may suck in religion with their milk, and, like Timothy, may (*απο βρεφης*) *from* their very *infancy* become acquainted with the *Holy Scriptures*.[h]

[2.] To take pains with them in teaching them.

This is absolutely necessary. *Thou shalt teach them diligently*,[i] (Heb.) whet it upon them. In whetting, you turn the thing whetted on this side, and on that side, and often repeat the strokes. So, in teaching of children, the mind is affected *(non vi, sed sæpe cadendo)* not by the violence, but by the frequency, of the impression. The minds of children, like narrow-necked bottles, must be filled but slowly, drop by drop. The young must be driven with patience, as they can go, to allude to Gen. xxxiii. 14. Special care must be taken to make things plain to them; condescending to their capacities, and lisping to them in their own language; conveying instruction by things sensible, or otherwise affecting; and making it, as much as may be, not a task, or burthen, but easy and pleasant. Children are half taught when they are reconciled to instruction.

There is one thing, which parents should especially be induced to, by the baptism of their children, and that is, to introduce them early into adult communion; bringing them to own the covenant of their baptism, and to take it upon themselves, by an approved profession of personal faith and repentance, in order to their regular admission to the ordinance of the Lord's supper. The profession of the parents was accepted, when they were infants; but being grown up, they must be called upon to make it their

g Exod. ii. 9.

h 1 Tim. iii. 15.

i Deut. vi. 7.

own act and deed. Hereby parents transfer much of their charge to the children themselves; who, becoming capable of acting for themselves, need not be in ward. God hath promised to pour out *his Spirit upon our seed*, and *his blessing upon our offspring*; and it follows, *they shall spring as willows by the water courses; and one shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and shall surname himself by the name of Israel.*[k] The blessing promised to our infant seed, is in order to hasten them personally to own their relation to God. Many parents, who would think themselves undone if they should not have their children baptized, take no care to bring them to the Lord's supper; as if that were not as necessary a recognition of their adult church membership, as baptism of their infant church membership.

Not that I would have children brought blindfold to confirmation, or the Lord's supper; nor brought by force; no, it must be a reasonable service; *(thy people shall be willing;)* but I think that children, when they grow up to a competent understanding, should be first instructed concerning adult communion; the terms of it, the privileges of it, the duty of it, the desirableness of it; should be taught the nature and design of the Lord's supper, and of that covenant of which it is the seal; and then should be persuaded to it, and stirred up to desire it. If they are careless, and unmindful of their souls and eternity, they should be alarmed, and excited to look about them, and concern themselves about so great a salvation. If timorous, and fearful, (which is a much better extreme,) they should be encouraged and comforted. Parents commonly pretend, as an excuse, that they do not see their children fit for the Lord's supper, or desirous of it, when they do not take pains to make them fit, and to stir up their desires. I know that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong: we can but do our duty, and leave the success to the free grace of God; who will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him.

(2.) It is to be used, as an argument with the children, to receive the instructions that are given them.

This will be of use, to open the ear to instruction, and to dispose the heart for learning. You may by this, take hold of them, and reason the case with them. Tell them what God promised *to* them, and what you promised *for* them; the one to *encourage*, and the other to *engage* them, to that which is good. When you are reproving them for sin, and warning them against it, argue from their baptism. Tell them how contradictory lying, and sabbath-breaking, and swearing, and taking God's name in vain, &c. are to their profession, and promise, in that ordinance. The sons of nobles are often reminded, that they must do nothing unbecoming their blood, nothing that would reflect upon their families; and should not the sons of Christians be, in like manner, exhorted not to disparage their Christianity. Remind them of their baptismal dedication and separation, when you are cautioning them to save themselves from an untoward generation; especially in the great turns of life.

3. Improve your children's baptism, in providing for them.

The light of nature, as well as Scripture precepts, make it your duty to supply them with things needful for them, as God gives you ability. If any man do otherwise, *he is worse than an infidel*;[l] no better than the unnatural *ostrich, that leaveth its eggs in the earth.*[m] Though our main care must be, to instruct them, our next must be, to make provision for their comfortable subsistence. And,

(1.) We may, from their baptism, take direction in providing for them.

Baptism was to them the seal of the covenant of grace. The provision God made for them, in that covenant, was of spiritual blessings in heavenly things: be chiefly solicitous about those things. But that care is not to exclude, but to govern and overrule, your other cares. You must provide callings and employments for them: be directed herein by their baptism; and make that provision which will be most likely to answer and secure the ends of their baptism. As far as you can determine, choose those callings for them, which are best for their souls; most free from temptations, and best subservient to the general calling; in which (according to their place and capacity) they may most glorify God, and be most serviceable to their generation. If there be a due fitness for the work of the Christian ministry, the consideration of their baptism may be a particular inducement to devote them to that.

In providing estates and portions for them, seek not great things, but good things. Account that to be best for them which will be best in the end, and provide accordingly; food convenient, bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that they may come at last to their Father's house in peace; and then God will provide.

Parents also should from hence take a caution, to provide for their children by lawful and honest means. There is no need of our sin to bring to the birth God's promises. Those parents do not understand, or do not consider, the baptism of their children, who destroy their own souls to make their children rich. Those who depend upon provision by the covenant, need not take any indirect courses to make that provision. If God be the God of Abraham, and hath promised to make him great, Abra-

k Isa. xliv 3—5

l 1 Tim. v. 8. m Job xxxix. 14, 15.

ham will not reflect upon that covenant, by taking any thing of the king of Sodom, *lest he should say, I have made Abraham rich.*[n] Distrust of God, and of his promise, draws many into crooked paths, and puts them upon base and sinful measures, to enrich their children. You went to God for the promise, do not go to the devil for the performance; nor inquire of Baalzebub, the God of Ekron, while there is a God in Israel, who hath said, that he will be *a God to you, and to your seed.*

(2.) We may take encouragement from their baptism, in providing for them.

What can be more encouraging, in this respect, than that God hath engaged to provide for them? *The seed of the upright shall be blessed,*[o] even with temporal blessings, as far as is for God's glory, and their good. Have an eye to that promise, and plead it with God. Will he not provide for his own, especially those of his own house? If God be to them a God, they have enough. You are in care to lodge what you have for them in good hands; I know not how you can do better, than to lodge it by faith, and prayer, in the hands of God.

4. Improve your children's baptism, in reference to your parting with them.

We live in a parting world, and must provide accordingly. Those who are knit closest together, by love and nature, must expect to be separated. Parents and children are often parting,

(1.) In the world.

Parents are parting with their children from under their eye, and from under their wing. Sending them abroad for education, or into callings, or in marriage. Concerns which commonly lie much upon the hearts of parents: but so it must be: the young tree must not grow always in the nursery; but at length be transplanted into its proper place in the orchard. And when it comes to that, remember their baptism; and trust them in the arms of covenant love. If they are God's children, wherever they go they are not off their Father's ground, nor out of their Father's house. Though they seem the less *yours* when they are gone from you, yet they are not less *the Lord's;* which may be no less a comfort to *you*, than a caution to *them*. Are they the Lord's? Then send them no whither, but whither you can in faith desire God to go with them. When they go from under your eye, they do not go from under God's eye; neither the eye of his providence nor the eye of his observance. When you send them from you, remind them of their baptismal engagements, both to caution and to quicken them. Dismiss them with a covenant blessing; as Isaac sent away Jacob, (Gen. xxviii. 3, 4.) *God Almighty bless thee, and give thee the blessing of Abraham.* Tell them, and tell yourselves, that *the Lord watcheth between* you and *them, when you are absent the one from the other.*[p]

Parents and children are parting,

(2.) Out of the world.

The most solemn partings are those which death makes. Death parts those whom nothing else would part; and, particularly, parents and children. You have need to prepare for such parting providences.

You that are parents may take comfort from your children's baptism,

1. When your children are, by death, taken from *you.*

A common case. Death observes not the laws of seniority; but often takes the children before the parents. In such a case, think of their baptism,

(1.) To induce you cheerfully to resign, and give them up, to God.

When you brought them to be baptized, you devoted them to God; transferred your own interest in them to him; you told him that they should be his, to all intents and purposes; and may he not then do what he will with his own? It is a quieting consideration, (I know those who have found it so,) that they are the Lord's, by your own consent. He not only gave them to you, but (which is for ever an estoppel to all complaints) you gave them to him again. Make it appear that you did it in sincerity, by your silent submission to the will of God, in removing them from you. Do not say, as David, *Would God I had died for thee;*[q] but as Job, when he had buried all his children together in the ruins of their elder brother's house, *Blessed be the name of the Lord.*[r] Sense will suggest a great deal, at such a time, that is aggravating: it was a pretty child, very forward and engaging; it may be, an only child, a first-born; but let this answer all, that God doth but take his own. When your children were to be dedicated to God in baptism, forasmuch as they could not do it themselves, you acted as the trustees of their wills; do so when they come to die. As, if you were to die yourselves, you would commit yourselves into the hands of God; so, when your children are dying, who cannot do it for themselves, it lies upon you to do it for them. Say, Father, into thy hands I commend my child's spirit. In baptism you resigned them to be members of the church militant, and surely now you cannot, you will not, gainsay their removal to the church triumphant. It looks like a very contented word of good old Jacob, (Gen. xliii. 14.) *If I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.* He doth not say, I am undone, I shall never see a good day again; but, I am bereaved, and the will of the Lord be done.

(2.) To encourage you concerning their eternal happiness.

What ground of hope there is concerning the sal-

n Gen. xiv. 23. o Ps. cxii. 2. p Gen. xxxi. 39. q 2 Sam. xviii. 33. r Job i. 21.

ation of children of believing parents, who die in ncy, was showed before; take comfort from it such occasions. They were within the pale of church; within the verge of the covenant; ıin reach of that promise, *I will be a God to thee, to thy seed.* I ground not the hope of their sal- on, merely upon the external administration of ordinance, as if there were no hope concerning ıe who die unbaptized; but I ground it upon r covenant right to the ordinance. David's d died on the seventh day; it is supposed the ɔnth day from its birth, and therefore uncircum- d, and yet David comforts himself with the hope ts salvation, *I shall go to him, but he shall not re- to me.*[s] This must needs be very comfortable ler such providences. They are taken out of r arms, but are removed to the embraces of a ter father. Say not you have lost your child, have but sent it before you. And it must needs pleasing to think, that you have a part of your- ɾes in glory. Who are we, that we should help to ple the New Jerusalem? Though your children early removed from this world, surely there is harm done, for the time they have lost on earth y have gained in heaven. If therefore it be asked, *it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it l with the child?* say, as the Shunammite woman in a like case, *It is well.*[t]

. When you are taken from *them;* and perhaps ve them young, and little, and shiftless, undis- ed of, unprovided for. This is no uncommon e, and a very melancholy consideration to many ying father; who is by this, more perhaps than any thing else, made unwilling to die. But let this ɔnce all disquieting cares and fears concerning m, that they are by baptism taken into covenant h God; a God with whom *the fatherless findeth rcy.*[u] God hath expressed a special concern for fatherless, (Ps. lxviii. 4, 5.) He who *rides upon heavens by his name Jah,* is, and will be, *a Father he fatherless.* He hath *taken up, when father and ther have forsaken.*[v] This God is your God, and God of your seed; and hath encouraged you to ve *them with him;* promising *to preserve them re.*[w] Though you leave many, they are not too ıny for God to take care of. Though you have le to leave them, (Jehovah-jireh,) let the Lord ɔvide; there is wealth enough in the promise. ough you have few or no friends to leave them to, d can raise up friends for them. He who can, t of stones, raise up children to Abraham, can and ll, out of stones, raise up guardians for those chil- en, rather than they should be deserted. You ve never seen the seed of the righteous, *begging ead, forsaken.*[x] Give them your parting blessing faith; the angel that has delivered you from all evil, will *bless the lads;* forasmuch as his name is named upon them. They were some of David's last words, and may be a great support and cordial to dying believers; *Although my house be not so with God,* (not so as I could wish it,) *yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.*[y]

[s] 2 Sam. xii. 23. [t] 2 Kings iv. 26. [u] Hos. xiv. 3.
[v] Ps. xxvii. 10. [w] Jer. xlix. 10.
[x] Ps. xxxvii. 25. [y] 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.
[z] Ps. cxvi. 18. [a] 1 Cor. xi. 22.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DIRECTIONS TO THOSE WHO ARE PRESENT WHEN THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM IS ADMINISTERED.

HERE I take it for granted, that it is most agreeable to the nature and design of the ordinance, that it be administered publicly; not huddled up in a corner, but owned in the face of the congregation, (if it may be,) the full congregation, that usually meets for other religious exercises; *in the presence of all his people.*[z] However, I think it requisite that, except in cases of necessity, there should be a competent number present, (such a number as may be called a congregation,) that the child may have the benefit of the more prayers, and that others may be benefited by the administration. And therefore, in the close, I would give some directions to the congregation.

1. Do not turn your backs upon the administration of this ordinance; but be present at it. Think not yourselves unconcerned in it. Though the sacrament be administered only to the child; yet the word and prayer, which accompany the sacrament, you are all interested in, and may reap benefit by, if you have but a *heart to it.* It is a great contempt of the ordinance, and argues a very low esteem of a divine institution, needlessly to absent ourselves. It is a very ill thing to think meanly of any divine appointment. He said very well, who acknowledged, that the greatest of men are less than the least of the ordinances of Jesus Christ. Besides that it is a contempt of the congregation; (as if we thought ourselves too good to bear them company;) and *despising the church of God,*[b] is an affront to God himself.

2. Carry yourselves with reverence and seriousness during the administration.

It is a very solemn ordinance, and should be attended upon in a solemn manner. That inward awe, which should possess us in divine worship, must put a gravity upon the outward deportment. Whispering, and laughing, and other irreverences of behaviour, at this ordinance, are a provocation to God, an affront to the institution, a disturbance to others, and a bad sign of a vain and carnal mind. And yet how common! Surely in this, as in other duties, God is to be *worshipped with reverence, and godly fear;* for *he is greatly to be feared, in the assemblies*

*of his saints.* We have need, at this ordinance, to double our guard against such indecencies, because, sometimes, some little accident may happen, in the external administration, which may give occasion to a light and frothy spirit to express itself in such a carriage. But if we remember in whose presence we are, and what is doing, it will be a curb upon us, and keep us serious.

3. Apply your minds seriously to observe, and consider, that which is the substance, meaning, and end of the ordinance.

We are very apt, in positive institutions, *(hærere in cortice,)* to look no further than the shell, or outside, without penetrating into the substance of the ordinance, or considering what is the *meaning of the service.* The external signs which should direct us *to*, many times direct us *from*, the consideration of the things signified. Therefore lay a charge upon your souls, to consider diligently what is before you. Let not the circumstances of the ordinance, (as the manner of washing, or the naming of a child,) draw away your thoughts from the substance. Consider it as a seal of the covenant of grace, and be mindful of that covenant. Your thoughts have a wide field to range in, where (if so disposed) you might furnish them with sweet and profitable matter to work upon.

4. Make application of that matter to yourselves.

Let your thoughts work upon your affections. The case of the baptized infant is a common case: it was once your own, and therefore the business in hand still concerns you. As we should be affected at the burial of our neighbours, because their situation *will be*, so we should, at the baptism of our neighbours, because *it hath been*, our own. In *this*, therefore, as well as in *that*, we should *lay it to heart.* Dionysius Alexandrinus speaks of one of his congregation, who was mightily affected with the questions put to the baptized, and their answers, so that, throwing himself at the minister's feet, he sadly bewailed himself, with many tears, Euseb. Eccles. Hist. *l.* vii. *c.* 9.

(1.) Take this occasion to reflect upon the original corruption of your nature, which needed cleansing.

We have need to be often reminded of this, [1.] That we may be daily mourning over it. To an enlightened conscience, it is an aggravation of sin, rather than an extenuation, that it is in our nature. Considering this, as an habitual aversion to the chief good, and an habitual proneness to the greatest evil, the thoughts of it should melt and break our hearts, and keep up an habitual repentance, and self-abhorrence, all our days. [2.] That we may be daily mortifying it, and keeping it under. Every remembrance of natural corruption should excite our watchfulness and diligence to destroy this root of bitterness. Lay the axe therefore to it: keep a guard against the first motions of sin: get the vicious habit weakened. A sense of the difficulty there is in dealing with such enemies, should not be used as an excuse for our negligence, but rather as a spur to our diligence. Maintain the conflict, and, through the grace of Jesus Christ, the victory will be sure at last. *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*

(2.) Take this occasion to acknowledge the mercy of your own infant baptism.

In our thanksgivings to God for his mercies, it is very good to begin early. If God remembers, I am sure we have no reason to forget, the *kindness of our youth.* Not that we loved him, but that he loved us. We should by no means forget his ancient favours: *(when Israel was a child, then I loved him:*[c]*)* we should be often thinking of God's goodness to us when we were children; especially his spiritual favours, relating to our better part. What is said of God's early kindness to an infant state, (Ezek. xvi. 3, &c.) is very applicable to our infant souls: when we lay exposed and polluted, *he said unto us live, he spread his skirt over us, and sware unto us. and entered into covenant with us, and we became his: then he washed us with water, and anointed us with oil, and clothed us with broidered work, and decked us with ornaments:* and was not the time a time of love? to be often mentioned to the glory of free, preventing grace? Was it he who *held us up from the womb, and took us* (took us into covenant) *from our mother's bowels?* surely then, *our praise should be continually of him.*[d]

[1.] Bless God for the honour of your infant baptism; that you were added to the visible body of Christ when you were young. To be ranked among the seed of saints, is surely more truly great, and honourable, than to be enrolled in the race of nobles. Ishmael shall beget twelve princes, that is but a small favour, *my covenant will I establish with Isaac.*[e] Surely herein the covenant of grace, in the external administration of it, was well ordered, and much in our favour, that the lambs are not turned out of the fold. Mention it therefore to the glory of God. Is it not an honour to be admitted into the school, the corporation, the family, of which Christ is the head? Hail! thou that art highly favoured. It is an honour not to be proud of, for we never merited it, but to be thankful for, and lived up to. [2.] Bless God for the opportunity of your baptism. That you were thereby put, as Zaccheus, into Christ's way; laid at the gate of the temple, ready to receive an alms, and a cure; placed by the pool-side, ready to step in, upon the stirring of the waters. If you have not improved this opportunity, it is your own fault; you cannot but own, that it was a favour to have

[c] Hos. xi. 1. [d] Ps. lxxi. 6. [e] Gen. xvii. 20, 21.

ad such a price put into your hands, by which you ight have gotten wisdom, if you had not been anting to yourselves.

(3.) Take this occasion to remember the obligaions of your own infant baptism.

Though you were baptized long since, yet the tie s as strong as if you had been baptized this morng: for as time doth not wear out the guilt of our ins, so it doth not wear out the obligation of our ows. You know that it was an engagement against ll sin, and to all duty; it was a bond upon your ouls, to be the Lord's, and to walk and live accordngly. When you see others brought under the ame bond, remember that these vows are upon *you*. And remember it,

[1.] With a renewed repentance for the breach of our baptismal covenants. Think now, and think with sorrow and shame, in how many things you have violated these engagements: (which were so very strong, and yet withal so reasonable:) though not in the essentials of the covenant, *(by stretching out the hand to a strange god,)* yet, in the several articles of the covenant, how wretchedly have we prevaricated! Though in the main we hold to the covenant, and would not disclaim it for all the world, yet in how many instances do we come short! It is well for us, that every transgression in the covenant, doth not put us out of covenant: but that there is a door of hope opened; room left for a reconciliation. Repent, therefore, of your manifold transgressions. Aggravate sin by this consideration, that it is ingratitude; that it is perfidiousness; that it is perjury; and reproach yourselves for it.

[2.] With renewed resolution of closer walking for the future. Let the sight of the administration of the ordinance quicken your sense of the vows of God, which are upon you; and confirm your purpose, to *pay that which you have vowed*. We are witnesses against ourselves, if having so solemnly *sworn*, we do not *perform it*. They tell us of one in early times, who being present where a child was baptized, and being affected with the solemnity of the service, asked, Was I thus baptized? And being told he was, Why then, saith he, by the grace of God, I will not do as I have done. It is good to be often engaging ourselves afresh. *I said, I will take heed to my ways*, (Ps. xxxix. 1.) and many a thing we do, because we said, we will do it. Do this therefore, live *soberly, righteously, and piously, in this world, denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts*, because you have said that you will.

5. Join heartily in prayer to God for the child that is baptized.

Every thing is sanctified by the word and prayer; and particularly this ordinance. It is the minister's work to be the mouth of the congregation in that duty, but it is your business to join. To be where prayer is made, is not praying, if we do not concur in what is said. Pray heartily, that God would receive the child into the embraces of his love; would impress his own image upon it; so as to sanctify it from the womb; and make the ordinance effectual to this end. That which gives prayer its prevalency, is the exercise of grace in prayer. There are two graces to be especially exercised in this prayer:

(1.) Faith in Christ the head.

It is the prayer of faith that is the effectual prayer. Act faith upon the good will of Christ to little children; upon the constitution of the covenant; the promise which is to us and to our children; the encouragement Christ hath given us to expect his gracious acceptance: these things we should realize by faith.

(2.) Love to the mystical body, and to all the members of it; even the little ones, who cannot pray for themselves.

God hath expressed a great deal of good will to little children; and we should herein be followers of him. Children are therefore publicly presented to God in this ordinance, in the face of the congregation, that they may, the more sensibly, and affectionately, be taken into the compass of our prayers. It is indeed the special duty of parents to pray for their children, but it will be a kindness to them, to help them by your prayers. The best welcome you can give the child, on its admission into the church, is to put up a fervent prayer for it. It is now become one of your *brethren and companions*, for the sake of whom, you must *pray for the peace of Jerusalem*.[f] And who knows what influence the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man, put up in faith, may have upon the good, the spiritual good, of the child. If *a cup of cold water*, given to one of the *little ones, in the name of a disciple, shall have its reward*,[g] much more shall a serious believing prayer, put up for one of the little ones, in the name of a disciple, a fellow-disciple, be accepted, and taken kindly. The hearts of Christians are very much knit one to another in love, by their praying one for another. There are many expressions of Christian charity which children are not capable of receiving, but I am sure they are capable of being prayed for, and have need of our prayers. There would then be reason to hope, that the rising generation would be better than this, if we did but pray more and better for it. The children for whom you thus pray at their baptism, may be reaping the benefit of your prayers, when you are dead and gone; however, they will return into your own bosom, for true prayer is never altogether *in vain*.

6. Bless God for the addition of another member to the visible church of Christ.

[f] Ps. cxxii. 6.

[g] Matt. x. 42.

It is in our duty *in every thing to give thanks;* but the baptism of a child affords special matter for praise.

(1.) In that the Lord Jesus is hereby honoured, and his name glorified.

It is part of the exaltation of Christ, *that a seed shall serve him, and shall be accounted* for *to the Lord a generation.* The further his name goes, the more he is honoured. The preservation of the succession of Christians is, therefore, the propagation of the honour of Christ. The multitude of the people is the glory of the prince. Christ is pleased to reckon himself glorified by the increase of his kingdom. Now that should certainly be matter of rejoicing to us, which any way tends to advance the glory of the Lord Jesus. Additions to his church he placeth among the achievements of his crown: particularly the addition of little children. Christ had but one day of triumph in all his life, and the glory of that triumph consisted much in the acclamations and Hosannas of the little children:[h] nay, lest the acceptance should be limited to children who were of age properly to express themselves, it follows in the next verse, *out of the mouth of babes and sucklings,** *thou hast perfected praise;* as if it were the top of Christ's praises, that he is in covenant with little children. Mention this therefore to his praise.

(2.) In that there is a precious soul hereby put into the way of salvation: though not necessarily entitled to salvation, (that doth not follow,) yet put into the way; taken into the school of Christ; enrolled amongst those who stand fair for heaven, and are intrusted with the means of grace and salvation. This is a great benefit to the child; which we should rejoice in, and bless God for; giving thanks, not only for our own interest in the covenant, and the interest of our seed, but for the interest of our friends, and of their seed. Rejoice that there is one brought into the outward court, whom we are not without hopes of meeting shortly within the veil.

If it be objected, that this child may afterwards prove wicked and vile, notwithstanding; may be a scandal to the church, and ruin his own soul; and all this, aggravated by his visible church membership: I answer, it is very true; and that one baptized at mature age, may turn out in like manner: there is no remedy; sacraments do not confer grace *(ex opere operato)* by the mere administration; but till worse appears, we must rejoice, and be thankful, in hope of the best. We all agree to rejoice, when *a man is born into the world,* when an heir is born into the family; and yet, perhaps, he may prove a burthen and a blot to his family, and the curse and plague of his generation.

(3.) In that the church of God is hereby increased. There is one more brought into the family: and blessed be God, there is room enough in our Father's house, and bread enough and to spare. Rejoice that the interest of the church is hereby strengthened. The promise is, that the seed of the saints shall be *as the stars of heaven:* be thankful for the fulfilling of that promise; that the body of Christ is a growing body; that though the members of the church militant are daily removed by death, yet there are those who are baptized (*υπερ νεκρων*) *in the room of the dead,*[i] to bear up the name of Christ in the world, and to preserve a succession of professing Christians. Thus shall the seed of Christ *endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven:*[j] and they shall *fear him as long as the sun and the moon endure;*[k] which we should think and speak of, with a great deal of joy and thankfulness. We are not without hopes, that God hath great things in store for his church, in the latter days; that there are glorious promises to be fulfilled shortly: in reference to which, it is some encouragement, that there is a seed preserved; that the line is continued; that the entail is not quite cut off; but that a generation is rising, which may enter into that promised Canaan, though our carcasses may fall in the wilderness, for our unbelief and murmuring. And though all are not *Israel* who are of *Israel,* though all are not saints indeed who are baptized Christians, (would to God they were, yet surely among them there is a remnant, according to the election of grace, which is thus invested in church privileges. And hereby the mystical body is filling up. Which should be matter of joy and praise to us. That the hour hastens on when the number of the elect shall be completed; when *the bride, the Lamb's wife,* shall have *made herself ready;*[m] and the *marriage of the Lamb shall come.* When, though there will be found virgins in profession, with lamps in their hands, who shall be excluded for their folly, yet the chosen remnant of Wisdom's children, the virgins who were so wise as to get oil in their vessels, such as were not only baptized with water but with the Holy Ghost, shall go in to the marriage. Then shall there be a general assembly of the church of the first-born, whose names were written in heaven. The scattered members of the mystical body, that lived in distant places, from one end of heaven to the other, and in distant ages, from the beginning to the end of time, shall all be gathered together to Christ the head, in one pure, unmixed, glorious congregation, and so presented to the Father; and altogether be put in possession of the inheritance of sons. How should the believing prospect of this day raise our thoughts, inflame our joys, and excite our most earnest desires! Even so come, Lord Jesus; come quickly.

h Matt. xxi. 15.

* Νηπιων—children that cannot speak; και θηλαζοντων—children that are at the breast.

i 1 Cor. xv. 29.

j Ps. lxxii. 5.

k Ps. lxxxix. 29.

m Rev. xix. 7.

# PREFACE

TO THE

# LIFE OF THE REV. THOMAS BEARD.

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### To the Reader.

Being favoured with the perusal of these papers in manuscript, by means of my acquaintance with that family of which this pious young man was a promising branch, I am willing to say with what pleasure I read them, and to recommend them to those of the rising generation among us, for whose real service and benefit they are designed.

It was an observable method, which both our blessed Lord and his apostles sometimes took, to preach a sermon first, and then work a miracle for the confirmation of it; or to work a miracle first, and then preach a sermon for the improvement of it. Miracles are now ceased, but (blessed be God) preaching is not, nor the power of the Spirit, *confirming the word by signs following*, of another nature. You have here a very pathetical, serious sermon; designed to engage all young people, and particularly the children of godly parents, to be betimes religious: and you have here joined with it a bright and eminent example of early piety, and that to a miracle of divine grace, which the sermon both gives the improvement of, and receives confirmation from.

How powerful the influence of bad examples is, to corrupt and debauch, we see daily: I am willing to hope, that this, and other the like good examples, may have a happy influence upon some, by the grace of God, to provoke them to a holy emulation; and may serve both as the plainest directions, and strongest persuasives, to all the instances of serious godliness; for it is not the interest of any party that this is intended to serve, but that of *pure religion* only, unmixed and *undefiled before God and the Father*.

The reflections which this thinking, praying youth made upon his own life, then when he had but few years to reflect upon, are here given you, as they ought to be, in their own native plainness and godly simplicity; and though, considered in themselves, there may be thought nothing extraordinary in them, that they should deserve to be published; yet looked upon as coming from one of sixteen or seventeen years of age, they are really uncommon, and upon that account, one may hope, will be the more taken notice of by those of that age: and to a good Christian, one truly *pious* thought is worth ten *fine* thoughts. And the publishing of them may help to make some little amends for the mighty loss we sustained by the death of one, that was so likely to have been serviceable to his generation. Nay, they may serve for a copy to the ripest and oldest Christians, and may shame many that have doubled and trebled his years, and yet are not so well acquainted as he was with their own spirits. The books which that learned and virtuous emperor, *Marcus Antoninus, wrote* εις εαυτον—*concerning himself*, and *to himself*, are very valuable pieces of antiquity. And we should all find our hearts better, if we did more frequently retire into them; and our lives better, if we did more frequently reflect upon them.

Perhaps, if there were such a collection of the most remarkable instances of devotion, in those that were about the age of this young man, both which have been published, and which might be gathered up from credible reports, as there is of those in the earlier age, by Mr. *White*, in his *Little Book for Little Children*, and Mr. *Janeway*, in his

*Token for Children;* it might be as useful in its kind, as these have been to the age for which they were calculated. St. *John* writes distinctly to *little children*, and to *young men*, 1 John ii. 12, 13.

That God, by his grace, would make the next generation wiser and better than this, and qualify many to be a seed to serve Christ, that *from the womb of the morning he may have the dew of their youth*, and the church the blessed fruits of that dew, through a long day, and that the *first-ripe fruits* which *our souls desire*, may not be *nipt*, as here they were, in the blossom, is the desire and prayer of,

A hearty wellwisher to the rising generation,

MATTH. HENRY.

*Chester,*
*March* 1, 1710-11.

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# PREFACE

TO

# MURREY'S CLOSET DEVOTIONS.

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## TO THE READER.

IT is certain and evident that the power and prevalency of a spirit of true devotion, as it is very much the holiness and comfort of particular persons in whom it reigns, so it would go far towards the redressing of the general grievances of the church and nation; and both in the heart and in the world, would introduce a heaven upon earth. And even from secret devotions, as from a root or spring unseen, a great deal of public benefit may arise, through the grace of Him, who even in this world, in this way, rewards openly the good he sees in secret.

I must, therefore, always readily and gladly lend a hand, such a one as it is, to every thing that may contribute towards the keeping up, and carrying on, of a correspondence between heaven and earth, and to assist the breathings of humble pious souls towards God; which I think this composure of *Closet Devotions* hath a direct tendency to, among the many books for direction and help in prayer we are blessed with, in our language; which are a valuable treasury, capable of being added to.

And I cannot but take this occasion to say, with what pleasure I observed, that in the late act of parliament, which lays a duty upon all pamphlets, and particularly newspapers, there is an express proviso, that books of piety and devotion shall not be charged with the duty, that they might not be made dearer, and so the spreading of them hindered; wherein methinks, the law hath given a very useful hint or intimation to the inhabitants of our land, which I heartily wish they would take; and it is this, that they would employ themselves more as those primitive Christians did, who *continued with one accord in prayer and supplication;* and less as the *Athenians* did, who *spent their time in nothing else but in telling and hearing, in writing and reading, new things.*

The assistance here offered to pious and devout affections, is such as needs not my commendation. If I be not mistaken, it will commend itself to those, who in their judgment approve helps of this kind, and will with a serious disposition look into it. For the matter of the devotion is of common concern to all Christians, at all times, and in all conditions. The first and great principles of our religion are to be to us as our daily bread, by receiving and digesting of which, the spiritual life is strengthened and supported. They are things which we ought frequently to inculcate upon our own hearts, that they may become very familiar to us, and ready at our right hand upon all occasions; such a copiousness there is in them to the enlightened understanding, that they can never be drawn dry, and such a pleasantness there is in them to the sanctified affections, that they can never be worn thread-bare: They are

ke the manna, which every faithful *Israelite* can ve upon with abundant satisfaction, as long as he here in this wilderness; and desires no varieties, o other dainties: and which none but the mixed ıultitude will grow weary of, and call light bread.

And as the matter here is such as every one is conerned in, so the expression is such as every one may ıtelligently make use of. It is, as I think the lanuage of our devotions should be, plain, and easy, nd natural, and (which is particularly aimed at, nd more than any thing in this essay) it is throughut Scriptural: They are *words which the Holy Ghost :acheth*, and in those it is fittest to address to God. ome, perhaps, will despise it, because the language s not fine; for my part, I like it because it is not orced: The *enticing words of man's wisdom*, are no nore the strength and beauty of praying and preachng now, than they were in St. *Paul's* time, but the ommanding words of the oracles of God.

This matter is admirably well expressed, by a reat and celebrated judge, both of sense and lanuage, in a paper of the same date with this epistle, vhich coming into my hands so seasonably, just ıs this was going out of them, I beg leave to transcribe some lines: "It happens very well (saith our Spectator) that the *Hebrew* idioms run into the *English* tongue with a particular grace and beauty: our anguage has received innumerable elegances and mprovements from that infusion of Hebraisms, which ıre derived to it out of the poetical (I will add, and ther) passages in holy writ. They give a force and nergy to our expressions, warm and animate our anguage, and convey our thoughts in more ardent ınd intense phrases, than any that are to be met with ın our own tongue. There is something so pathetic in this kind of diction, that it often sets the mind in a flame, and makes our hearts burn within us. How cold and dead (saith he) doth a prayer appear, that is composed in the most elegant and polite forms of speech which are natural to our tongue, when it is not heightened by that solemnity of phrase, which may be drawn from the sacred writings. It has been said by some of the ancients, that, if the gods were to talk with men, they would certainly speak in *Plato's* style; but I think we may say, with justice, that when mortals converse with their Creator, they cannot do it in so proper a style, as that of the Holy Scriptures."

Those who find either need of, or advantage by, the words here made ready to their hands, may, no doubt, in their retirements, follow them with their pious affections, acceptably to God, and profitably to themselves, (as they do the prayers that are publicly offered up by their ministers in the congregation,) and make them their own; yet, with these needful cautions, that they double their guard against formality, and that they rest not herein, but press forward towards perfection. And those who, through divine grace, have obtained a good measure of the gift of prayer, by consulting and perusing these draughts of addresses to God, may be helped in using the gift they have, may be improved in it, and may have their *pure minds stirred up by way of remembrance*. Why may we not be taught to pray, as well as to meditate, from the performances of others? and why not from prayers in writing, as well as by word of mouth? The truth is, we need all the helps we can get to assist and further us in our work of this kind; and all little enough, nay, and all too little, unless the blessed Spirit himself *help our infirmities*, by *making intercession in us, with groanings, which after all cannot be uttered*.

But though this performance needs not my commendation, nor can my poor worthless name add any reputation to it, yet I think myself somewhat concerned to recommend it: partly, because the worthy author is one I have long known, and have an intimate acquaintance with, and a great value for; and I have reason to think him upon this account very fit to assist the devotions of others, because he is a devout good man himself, and of a piece with what you here see of him: and partly because the performance is somewhat corresponding with what I designed in the *Method for Prayer*, published about two years ago, as an example with the rule. The nail, as there directed, is here well driven: and O that, by a plentiful effusion of the Spirit of grace and supplication, the honest intentions of both may be answered, and it may be *a nail in a sure place*; and that this, and all other proper and pious endeavours to advance true devotion, may redound to the honour of God, and the spiritual and eternal welfare of the souls of men; to which I desire always to approve myself a hearty wellwisher.

MATT. HENRY.

*June* 14, 1712.

# SERIES OF SERMONS,

BY THE

## REVEREND MATTHEW HENRY.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS.

THE

# WORTH OF THE SOUL,

## IN SIX SERMONS.

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### SERMON I.

MATTHEW xvi. 16.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

THIS great and serious word comes in here as an argument against apostasy from the truths and ways of Christ. The terms of discipleship are laid down, *v.* 24. and lower we cannot bring them. *Self-denial* and *patient suffering* are the conditions of our being owned by Christ as his disciples; and these lessons will never be learned if we consult with flesh and blood; let us therefore consult with our Lord Jesus Christ, and hear his awakening declaration, that whoever forsake and deny Christ will certainly be losers by it. The two great temptations to apostasy are, fear of suffering, and hope of advantage.

1. He that denies Christ for fear of suffering will certainly be a loser. This he shows, *v.* 25. *Whosoever will save his life shall lose it.* He that by sin saves it in this world, will lose it in another. There cannot be a fairer pretence for apostasy, than saving the life by it, so very powerful is the law of self-preservation, but that will prove in the end the greatest self-destruction. There is a life to be lost besides that of the body.—Nay,

2. He that denies Christ for hope of worldly profit, will certainly be a loser at last. This is plainly declared in the text. The apostate thinks he has gain in his apostasy; but he has deceived himself; yet were his imaginary gain far more than it really is, it would be but a miserable compensation for his final loss. Christ speaks of the soul as immortal, and intimates the possibility of its loss, by which he intends the destruction of its happiness after the death of the body; now this is a loss which cannot be balanced by the gain of the whole world; drawing back is to the perdition of the soul, Heb. x. 39. It has been recommended by some as a very likely means to make a man serious, that he should spend one quarter of an hour every day in serious thoughts of this Scripture. It is a Scripture well known. O that it might be well studied and improved.

There are Six Doctrines from this text.

1. That every man has a soul of his own.
2. It is possible this soul may be lost.
3. If the soul be lost it is of the sinner's own losing.
4. One soul is more worth than all the world.
5. The winning of the world is oft the losing of the soul.
6. The loss of the soul is so great a loss that the gain of all the world will not make it up.

*For the 1st Doctrine,* That every man has *a soul of his own—his own soul.* (1.) I need not prove this to you, you will all own it, for this is a truth discovered by the very light of nature, though the atheists deny it, and make all the actions of the soul to be nothing else but the products of matter and motion. The same fools that say there is no God, say there is no soul. If man has not a rational immortal soul, farewell all religion—our preaching is vain, and your faith is also vain, 1 Cor. xv. 14. It is well for us daily to recollect the vast difference which exists between man and the brutes which perish. Man has a soul: this distinguishes him from all the inferior creatures, and gives him his dignity above them. And it becomes him ever to be upon his guard against every thing which might shake his faith in this fundamental truth; and as he has a soul, let him use it, which will be the best demonstration to others that he is indeed raised above the rest of God's creation.—My aim is, (2.) To explain the true doctrine as to the soul of man. We deal with souls, and about soul affairs, and therefore it concerns us duly to state that which is the great subject of our preaching.

I shall show, I. What the soul of man is. The brute creatures have a sensitive soul, we read of the spirit of a beast, Eccl. iii. 21. endued with the powers of sensation and imagination, and much of the power and wisdom of God is seen in them. But the soul of man is something above that, something distinct from the body. That faculty by which we correct the errors of imagination, and by which we reflect upon ourselves and carry on profound speculations about invisible things, must needs be a power above that of sense: and that is the rational soul. Not to trouble you with the curiosity of a definition, we shall consider the soul of man,

1. In its nature. We do not see it, any more than we see God, though he be not far from every one of us, Acts xvii. 27. We cannot find out to perfection either God or our own souls; yet something we know:

(1.) The soul is a vital principle; not matter, as the body, but a being that may and can subsist of itself, and be the subject of accidents. Man is said to be a living soul, Gen. ii. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 45. It is called the *light of men*, John i. 4. The soul is one of those things that *are*; it is not one of the appurtenances of the man, as the clothes are to the body, but it is a substance, to which other things are appendant.

(2.) It is a spiritual and immaterial principle. It is not matter, nor doth it depend upon matter, either in its being or operation. It is called a *spirit*. The manner of its working is immaterial and independent upon the body. Bodily powers have bodily organs, as the power of seeing has the eye; but the soul has no such organs by which it understands and reasons. The outward senses do but convey the object, and do not at all contribute to the immediate acts of the soul. The soul is capable of receiving the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. and being a spirit, by it we are related to the world of spirits.

(3.) Consider the soul. It is immortal, because immaterial. In its faculties, which are two, Principally,

(1.) Understanding. This we properly call *reason*, by which we are made wiser than the fowls of heaven, Job xxxv. 11. The spirit of man is understanding, Job xxxii. 8. There is a receptive operation of the understanding, by which it takes in what is offered and discovered to it, and an active operation of it, by which it discourses with itself, and thereby makes discoveries and communicates them to others. The soul is capable of knowing God, of which the brute creatures are incapable. This is God's gift, Job xxxviii. 36. We read of the eyes of the understanding, Eph. i. 18. and the understanding being darkened, Eph. iv. 18. Memory also is connected with the understanding.

(2.) Will; that faculty of the soul by which it chooses or refuses, according to the dictates of the understanding. The object of the will is good, at least apprehended to be so. To will, is to choose the good and refuse the evil, Isa. vii. 16. The understanding having deliberated, the will resolves. Corrupt will is enslaved by the sensual lusts; but otherwise the will in itself is free. The affections of the soul are branches of the will, in which the soul is carried out towards objects as they appear; in desire towards an absent good, delight in a present good, hope of a probable good, and love in all. Also in hatred of that which is evil; aversion to it, fear of it, and sorrow for it. These are the feet of the soul; these are to the man as the wind to the ship. Thus is the soul constituted: understanding relates to objects as they are; will relates to them as they are to us. The soul of man has a faculty of reflection and a power of anticipation. It can *call to mind*, Isa. xlvi. 8. and can by rational deductions look forward and foresee what is to come. The spirit of a man is the *candle of the Lord*, Prov. xx. 27. The will has the dominion in the soul under God, and is certainly something much greater than sensitive appetite. View the soul,

3. In its relation to God.

(1.) It is the gift of God, Eccl. xii. 7. God who *gave it*—he breathed it, Gen. ii. 7. Job xxxiii. 4. It is a ray of light from him who is the Fountain of light. He is the Father of spirits, Heb. xii. 9. It is the soul that he has made, Isa. lvii. 16. He *formeth the spirit of man within him*, Zech. xii. 1. and a curious piece of workmanship it is. There was a consultation, as it were, when man was to be made, Gen. i. 26. *Let us make man*. We are not the authors of our own being; our fathers are the fathers of our flesh only, but our souls are created by God himself. Thus man differs from the irrational creatures, and is advanced above them.

(2.) It bears the image of God, Gen. v. 1. *In the likeness of God*. The nature of the soul is some resemblance of the divine nature, though a faint one. Where the moral rectitude is lost, yet there is something of resemblance in the nature; and therefore it is a reason why man must not be killed, Gen. ix. 6. and cursed, Jam. iii. 9. God is light and life; and so is the soul. There the image of God in man appears most. This puts a great honour upon the soul. How lamentable it is that the image of God should be defaced by sin! This is the great disgrace of man, and the source of all his unhappiness. O be in earnest in seeking that sanctification in which the image of God is restored, Col. iii. 10.

(3.) It is made for God; made not only for his glory, and to show forth his praise, but more immediately for his use and service. It is that being only in this lower world that actively praises God, the rest only objectively, Ps. ciii. 1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name*. The soul was made to be the habitation of God, the temple of Christ, who dwells in the heart.

It was to be God's part in man. The heart is God's peculiar, which he demands, and in which he sets up his throne, Prov. xxiii. 26. It had its noble powers and faculties for this end, that it might serve and enjoy God, Isa. xliii. 7—21. It is therefore accountable to him. The soul is also to be regarded,

4. In its relation to the body.

(1.) It is now united to the body, and directs the body. The soul of man was made and intended for the body, to be the principle of its life. The soul's union with the body is the result of an infusion; still God breathes the breath of life. The soul thus united to the body, ordinarily performs its operations by the ministry of the body. Paul once knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body, 2 Cor. xii. 3. The soul governs the motions of the body, and is set over the rest of the works of God's hands; and in its present actings has some dependence upon the temperament and state of the body. Bodily diseases weaken the habits and disturb the operations of the mind.

(2.) It will shortly be separated from the body, and will then act in a state of separation. It lives now in the body, but it will live when the body is dead, Eccl. xii. 7. When the tabernacle shall be dissolved, the inhabitants shall live in another region. The soul will not die with the body. We read of the soul's being in paradise when the body is dead, Luke xxii. 43.—of the soul's being with Christ when it is departed from the body, Phil. i. 23.—of the souls of them that are slain crying with a loud voice, Rev. vi. 10. The very heathen had some notion of the immortality of the soul, and of its departure to happiness or misery, according to what was done in the body. When we speak of the soul as distinct from the body now, it will much help us to think of the separation of the soul and body. The soul will live and act when the body is in the grave, though how and in what way we cannot easily conceive. The soul of the wicked will be required, Luke xii. 20. the soul of the godly resigned, Acts vii. 59. The soul does not sleep as the body sleeps.

Show, II. Why it is called *our own soul*—his *own soul*.

1. It is but *one* soul—it is *soul* in the singular number—not souls, as of many, but one—the soul is called the *only one*, Ps. xxii. 20. margin. Being but one, the greater is the shame if we neglect it, and the greater is the loss if we lose it. If we lose an eye or a hand, nature has provided another which may in part make up the loss; but nothing is appointed to make up the loss of a soul, for we have but one God to serve, and one soul to save—one God in the great world, one soul in the little world. Being our only one, it should be our *darling*, like the poor man's ewe-lamb. Make not that thy drudge which should be thy darling.

2. It is *his own*. How his own? not in respect of absolute propriety and dominion. It is not our own to do what we will with it, and to dispose of it as we please; not as they said, our tongues are *our own*, Ps. xii. 4. So God challenges a right to them, and can make good his claim. We are *not our own*, 1 Cor. vi. 19. being not our own creators, we are not our own proprietors. God has said, *All souls are mine*, Ezek. xviii. 4. He made us, and his we are, to be commanded and disposed of by him. He is the God of the spirits of all flesh, Numb. xvi. 22. But it is *our own* soul,

(1.) As it is near and dear to ourselves. So it is more our own than any thing we have. Houses and lands are but appurtenances; our souls are our demesne; the concernments of them are more our concern than any thing else. Other things have but slender relation to us, but our souls and our God are our own—so our own, that, unless by our own default, as no creature gave them, so no creature can take them away. In them our concern lies most, Deut. xiii. 6. *Thy friend which is as thy own soul*—nothing can be nearer than that, thy soul is thyself.

(2.) As it is distinguished from the souls of others. They talk of the soul of the world; but every man has a soul of his own, distinguished from all others. Job supposes his friends' souls in his soul's stead, Job xvi. 4. but it was but a supposition. We must partake of the joys and sorrows of others' souls by sympathy, as members one of another; but our souls are our own; so that the salvation of another man's soul will not be the salvation of mine. We must bear one another's burthens, and yet every man prove his own work: see Gal. vi. 2, 4, 5.

(3.) As we are intrusted with it, and have it committed to our care, by him whose all souls are. It is our talent which we are to trade with, our vineyard which we are to keep, Cant. i. 6. Let this be your care. The charge we have received concerning these souls of ours, is to see to it,

[1.] That they be *employed* in the service of God in this world. We have our souls given us to be used in serving God. We have a power of knowing, that we may know God, and a power of loving, that we may love God. We were intrusted with these noble faculties, that we might glorify our Creator, serving him *with our spirits*, Rom. i. 9. We have our souls in vain, if we put God off with bodily exercise, which profits little, 1 Tim. iv. 8. We have souls to be engaged in approaching to God, Jer. xxx. 21. This cannot be if they be enslaved to the flesh, and polluted with fleshly lusts. How can a soul plunged in the things of sense, be fit to serve and have communion with the holy God. God will be worshipped in the spirit, John iv. 23. for he is a Spirit. Therefore God put some of his image upon us, that we might reflect glory to him; that we might glorify God with our spirits, 1 Cor. vi. 20. The body is good for nothing without the soul.

[2.] That they be *prepared* for the enjoyment of God in the other world. This charge is committed to every one of us, to get our souls in a readiness for the appearance of Christ, and for a future state. None shall partake of the blessedness of heaven but those that are first made ready for it. See that your souls be refined from that which is inconsistent with this blessedness, and previously disposed and inclined to that in which it consists. This is sanctification, making ready a people prepared for the Lord, Luke i. 17. and no little is required to prepare a soul for eternal glory. The people of God are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12. This is, and ought to be, the chief and continual care of every man in this life.

*Use* 1. If every man has a soul of his own, then every man has reason to be thankful to his Creator. Let us bless God for our rational souls, that we were endued with those noble powers which distinguish them. A soul is a jewel of value, for which we ought to give thanks to the Father of spirits. If all his works do praise him, much more should we. We were in God's hand as the clay in the hand of the potter, to be made vessels of honour or dishonour as pleased him, Jer. xviii. 6. Rom. ix. 20. And has he made us vessels of honour, how much are we indebted! Let us bless God, that we are made capable of blessing him. We are fearfully and wonderfully made, Ps. cxxxix. 14. *this my soul knoweth*—knoweth by experience. When man had made himself in respect of corruption like the beasts that perish, how justly might God have made him so in his constitution, Ps. xlix. 20. Let us praise God for an understanding, and beg of him that gave us the faculty, to give us grace in that faculty, that it may ever be employed in his service, and be blessed with the rich enjoyment of himself.

2. Then every man has reason to be thankful for his Redeemer, who is the best friend to souls that ever was, and has abundantly commended his love to souls. Well may the soul and spirit rejoice in him as the God of our salvation, Luke i. 46, 47. Through him the salvation of the soul is wrought out, and spiritual blessings for spiritual beings purchased, Eph. i. 3. To have a soul, had been but to have a capacity of being eternally miserable, if Christ had not interposed. He delivers the soul from the pit of destruction, Job xxxiii. 28. Every man that has a soul is concerned in that great salvation which he has wrought out.

3. There is good reason why we should honour all men. It is the law of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 17. *Esteem* all men, because every man has a soul, is thus far favoured of God, thus far equal with us. This is one thing wherein rich and poor meet together, Prov. xxii. 2. their hearts are fashioned alike, Ps. xxxiii. 15. Let none be treated with scorn, as unworthy to be set with the dogs of our flock, that has an immortal soul, as valuable in itself, and as precious in the sight of God, as our own. If he has not wealth he has a soul; therefore, let us not trample upon any, nor curse any, Jam. iii. 9. They do very ill that are more tender of a dog, or a horse, than of a man, or a woman, or a child, that has an immortal soul. Those that are poor and despised, may comfort themselves with this, that they have souls.

4. There is good reason why we should seek the spiritual welfare of all men. He that has a soul has a soul to save, and if every man has so, then we should pray for all men, 1 Tim. ii. 1. for all men have souls that are capable of serving and enjoying God. Think, here is a poor neighbour that has a soul of his own; can I do nothing for the welfare of that soul; nothing to *save a soul from death*, Jam. v. 20. nothing to win a soul, Prov. xi. 30. How should this quicken ministers to travail in birth again, and quicken all, in their places, to lay out themselves for the good of souls to the utmost. Say not, Why should we concern ourselves, whether they come to Christ's ordinances, or be taken notice of or not? Have they not souls? Christ preached to publicans; they had souls as well as Pharisees. Poor and maimed, and halt, had souls, and thus it is now. All souls were precious to Christ, and so they must to us, or we have not his Spirit.

5. It concerns every man to be busy. If every man has a soul of his own, he has enough to do to look after it. He has a talent to trade with—if but that one, it is enough to fill him with care. He has a vineyard to dress and to keep, which will find him with constant employment, or else it will soon become like the field of the slothful, Prov. xxiv. 30, &c. He that has a soul of his own, has somewhat to do to keep it, Prov. iv. 23. Deut. iv. 9.—to keep out spiritual wickedness, and to keep up spiritual duties. He that has a soul of his own, had need look about him, for he has a jewel of value in his hand, which he is in danger of losing,—is in the midst of enemies. He has much to set in order, and he has no time to be idle.

6. It concerns every man to prove his own work, Gal. vi. 4. If every man has a soul of his own, a separate interest of his own to mind, then it is ill to venture his soul, and the interests of it, in the same way that others venture theirs. If we have souls of our own, we must not follow the multitude to do evil, Exod. xxiii. 2. Do not say, Others venture upon sin, others neglect duty, and have not so much concern about religion, and therefore why should I be concerned? but remember, thou hast a soul of thy own, and shalt give account of thyself. Rom. xiv. 12. If others hazard their souls, it does not follow that I may hazard mine. I must follow God's directions, rather than the evil examples of men.

7. It is the unspeakable folly of most men, that they ve as if they thought they had no souls, or knew ot what the nature of their souls is. The world is ull of such fools, who profess to know that they have recious and immortal souls, but in works deny it. 'hey are guilty of this folly,

(1.) Who are careful to avoid that which is hurtul to the body, but take no care to avoid that which s prejudicial to the soul. Those live as if they had o souls, who are doing that every day without reret, that defiles the soul, Tit. i. 14. and wrongs the oul, Prov. viii. 36. and hazards the eternal happiess of the soul. Dost thou think thou hast a soul, nd yet art so unconcerned at spiritual miseries?

(2.) Those who are labouring for the meat that erishes, and take no pains for that which is meat for he soul; that are busy laying up treasure for their odies, but make no provision for the soul. Dost hou think thou hast a soul; and makest so light of Christ, and art careless in praying and hearing; eekest corn and wine, and any good, more than the avour of God, which is the life of the soul?

(3.) Those whose souls *take their ease* in the proits and pleasures of this world. The rich man, Luke xii. 19. knew he had a soul, but knew not the ature of his soul, else he would not have talked to t as he did. Those that bless their souls in the bundance of their worldly possessions, which perish n the using, know not that their souls are spiritual nd immortal, and so perish with a lie in their right hand.

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## SERMON II.

### Matthew xvi. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

Doctrine 2. That it is possible the soul may be *lost*. There is great danger of a man's *losing his own soul*. The word of God is a word of *warning*, Ps. xix. 11.—it tells us what we are in danger of while we go on in sin. The work of ministers is to give warning, Ezek. xxxiii. 7.—according to the word, to show people not only sin in its colours, but sin in its consequences; what hazards they run, while they abide by the choice of their own delusions. Therefore when the prophets prophesy falsely, it is no marvel if the people know not what will be in the end of it, Jer. v. 31. The text gives us warning of the danger we are in of losing our own souls. It is spoken of as a thing very possible, and it is good to know our danger. I shall

Show, I. What the *loss of the soul* is. And,

1. The metaphor must be opened. Interpreters agree not from what it is borrowed, but a metaphor it is. It stands opposed here to *gaining*. Profit and loss use to be considered together, as *v.* 25.—losing stands opposed to saving. In the consideration of peril only, it is enough to save; but in the consideration of profit, it is desirable to gain: and so it is to be considered here, not excluding the other, for Luke uses both words. The soul may be said to be lost,

(1.) *Recoverably* in this world.

[1.] As a wandering *sheep* is lost: and thus we are all by nature *lost*, Ps. cxix. 176. compare Isa. liii. 6. Thus a sinful condition is a lost condition, and they who continue in this condition, are for ever lost: see Matt. xviii. 12. Luke xv. 4. But this is a loss that is recoverable, Matt. xviii. 11. Luke xv. 32; xix. 10. A man loses his soul, while it goes astray from God; and a sad loss it is. Those that deny Christ to gain worldly preferment, by so doing, immediately *lose their souls*. They thus go astray like wandering sheep. As long as we are in any sinful way, so long we are wandering like sheep, which, while they wander, are from under the eye and care of the shepherd, and want the green pastures and the still waters. They are without the society of the flock, and are exposed to be worried by the dogs that seek to devour. This is the condition of backsliders. Let us bless God that there is a return from this lost state.

[2.] As a jewel of value is lost; a piece of silver, that is the comparison, Luke xv. 8, 9. The soul is a piece of silver, more valuable than thousands of gold and silver. It is capable of improvement by trading; it is stamped with God's image and superscription, though many esteem it as the dirt of the earth. This jewel is lost when we are put out of the possession of it. The devil has robbed man of it; that great destroyer of souls. Sensual pleasures take away the heart, and rob men for the present of their own souls, Hos. iv. 11. A man that is drunk, or is carried on by the violence of unbridled passions, has for the present lost his own soul, that precious jewel. The soul is also lost that is drowned in worldly pursuits. How lamentable, that such a precious jewel should be thus trampled upon! But this is recoverable by repentance and regeneration.

[3.] As a bewildered traveller is *lost*. A man is lost when he is out of his way—so is the soul. He that denies Christ, thus loses his soul, *i. e.* he wanders out of the way of understanding, Prov. xxi. 16. Thus a sinful state, especially a state of backsliding and apostasy, is a lost state, Ps. xiv. 3. *All gone out of the way*. We are lost, when we go out of the right and good way that leads to heaven, and turn aside to crooked paths, and are lost as a man in a wood, or labyrinth, which he cannot get out of. The right way is one, and though it be strait and narrow, yet it is a way of pleasantness, and we may find it, if our eyes look not aside. But by-paths are many, and

the sinner has no satisfaction in them. A man loses his soul when he plunges himself in the depths of Satan, and entangles himself in the snares of this world, those thorns that are in the way of the froward, traversing their way. Such are called upon to return, Jer. iii. 22. and to ask for the old way, Jer. vi. 16.

[4.] As a city or strong hold is *lost* to the enemy. He that turns away from Christ, delivers his soul into the hands of Satan, who gets the command of it, and keeps it as his palace. It should pay tribute to Christ; the strength of it should be employed for Christ; but it is *lost*, Satan has got possession of it, lusts rule, and the powers of the soul are engaged in the devil's cause, and are his armour wherein he trusts, Luke xi. 21, 22. When we yield to the assaults of Satan's temptations, and surrender to him, there is a soul lost. Rest not till it be retrieved. Let Christ come and lead captivity captive; submit to the conduct of Christ the Captain of salvation, yield to him, and he will get it, and take it—he whose right it is. Thus the soul may be lost, and it is possible it may be recovered. Be concerned that you may see yourselves to be in a lost condition. Seek after your own souls. Endeavour to gain possession of them. A man is never master of his own soul till Christ is master of it. Come to him as the great Shepherd, 1 Pet. ii. 25. the great guide to poor travellers. Rest not in a lost condition. Blessed be God, there is hope for lost souls, a remedy is provided. You are lost, but you may be found, if you do as the prodigal son did, return to your father. Aim also to keep possession of your souls. We are in danger of losing our souls every day, in particular temptations; therefore, double your guard. Let your eye be continually upon your souls; keep them with all diligence, and commit the keeping of them to God, 1 Pet. iv. 19. Luke xxi. 19.

(2.) The soul may be lost *irrecoverably* in the other world: and this is especially meant here. They that lose their souls in the by-paths of sin, and do not recover themselves by repentance *out of the snare of the devil*, 2 Tim. ii. 26. will be *lost* to all eternity; so lost as not to be sought for nor saved any more. Thus those that persist in unbelief are said to be *lost*, 2 Cor. iv. 3. *To them that are lost*, *i. e.* that wilfully shut their eyes against the gospel, and will not receive it. They are *lost*, *i. e.* not chosen in the counsels of divine love, left to be vessels of wrath, Rom. ix. 22. to them the gospel is hidden, Matt. xiii. 14. *Lost*, *i. e.* hastening inevitably to destruction. To be lost is to *perish*, perish eternally. Judas is called a *son of perdition*, John xvii. 12. not only actively, as far as was in his power destroying Christ, but passively, to be destroyed. He went to *his own place*, Acts i. 25. compare Ps. cix. 8, &c. which is referred to, and see what it is to be a son of perdition; that is more than to be lost; so the prodigal was, and yet found; but doomed to perdition, as Eph. ii. 3. children of wrath. The antichrist is called the son of perdition, 2 Thess. ii. 3. and see what that is, *v.* 12. and Rev. xiv. 9, 10. To perish eternally, is to *lose our souls*,

[1.] As the sinking ship is lost at sea. Lose his soul as the owner and merchant lose the ship and cargo, whatever the value is, when she splits upon a rock, or founders at sea; and many a man's all for this world is lost by the miscarrying of a ship at sea. it is lost without possibility of recovery. We are every one of us, in profession, making a voyage for heaven, are richly laden; the soul is exceedingly precious, it is our all; if that perish, the ship is sunk. it is *cast away*; that is the word in the parallel place, Luke ix. 25. Those that make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, make shipwreck of their own souls, 1 Tim. i. 19. The damnation of hell is compared to a man's sinking into the bottom of the sea. Matt. xviii. 6. Rev. xviii. 21. it is an irrecoverable ruin. Many a hypocrite spreads a large sail, and seems to make way apace for heaven; but there is some secret leak of corruption unstopped, and so he sinks of a sudden, and perishes perhaps within sight of the haven. The storm of persecution sinks many a soul that seemed fair, Matt. vii. 27. Some are sunk by being overloaded with this world, having much of it, and much to do in it, and letting it into their hearts, see 1 Tim. vi. 10.

[2.] As the stakes are lost when a man is beaten in his game; or rather, the money lost, when a man is cheated in his bargain. A good man stakes the world to heaven, hazards his temporal interests for the obtaining of an eternal happiness; and he wins abundantly:—see Paul staking his all for Christ, Phil. iii. 7, 8. A wicked, worldly man, stakes his soul to the world, to secure what he has, and to get more of it, and the devil plays against him, who lies in wait to deceive and destroy souls. The wicked man hazards his soul, and runs a great venture, and saith of the world, as Paul doth there of Christ, I count every thing but loss, even God and Christ and my soul, and heaven, that I may win the world. Satan is a subtle gamester, and wins the prize by deluding the soul.

[3.] As the cause is lost when a man is cast in it. The life of the soul is the inheritance we are in suit for. Let my soul live, is the demand; it is the inheritance of our fathers, which we are fools if we alienate. A wicked man when he comes to die would commit his soul to God, to be saved. Now here is a double cause to be tried. You demand the life of your soul—what title have you to your own souls, and the happiness of them? what evidences can you produce? were you marked for God? You expect a spiritual happiness from God—what work have you done for him? There is a debt, a great debt, upon your soul—had you an interest in Christ's satisfac-

n? what evidence of that interest have you? Was rist redemption to you? was he sanctification? Cor. i. 30. Again, you would give your souls up God. Satan comes, and saith they are his—you ve him your hearts. These causes will be tried at great day, and if we be cast, our souls are lost; writ of error lies from that tribunal: see the verse er the text.

[4.] As the condemned malefactor is lost. He s not at the mercy of the court, he has no reason expect that his sentence will be reversed, but that will be strictly executed: and thus the soul that is t is in a hopeless state, its eternal condemnation sealed. Mercy will then have done its work. hen a man has forfeited his life, and is convicted, s life is lost, he is a lost man; the forfeiture will rely be taken, for God is righteous. Hence he is id to *take away* the soul, Job xxvii. 8, as forfeited. is the description of the death of a wicked man, d perhaps of his damnation too, Luke xii. 20. Thy *ul shall be required of thee.* There is a soul lost, quired for the satisfaction of wronged justice; nce the sinner had no interest in Christ's satisfac-on, and God will abide by what he has said, that e soul that sins shall die. *Required of* thee as worthy of it—what should he do with a soul that ed it no better than that fool did? v. 19. That ul is lost that is under the curse of God, is con-cted and condemned in the judgment of the great ay. This is to lose the soul. A man may be a loser in a thing, and yet not absolutely lose it; but is is the absolute losing of the soul.

Having illustrated the metaphor, I will show,

2. What is principally intended by this expression *losing the soul.* It is not the annihilation of the ul, its losing of its being: no; it is a loss (I think) reater than that, even the loss of its well-being, hile its existence and faculties shall remain to ake it capable of misery: see Matt. xxvi. 24. It is e eternal misery of the soul, under that sentence, Depart from me ye cursed, Matt. xxv. 41. The soul s lost, when it is irrecoverably separated from all e good, and to all the evil, of which it is capable. t is the death of the soul. The text speaks of a isery which will seize the immortal soul—which ill reach its nature, and run parallel with its dura-ion. It is hard to conceive of this; as *eye has not een*, so it is known only to God, Job xxvi. 6. Let s take a view of that misery, and see what it is.

(1.) The lost soul will be for ever separated from he love and favour of God, in which alone the hap-iness of the soul consists. Hell is the loss of God, nd of all good—Depart *from me;* here they said to God, Depart, Job xxi. 14. then he will say so to them. The favour of God is the life of a soul, Ps. xxx. 5. Lost sinners shall be cast out of that favour, and herefore excluded from all good. The state of lost sinners is darkness, not the least glimpse of the divine favour, to eternity. God drove out the man from the garden of Eden, Gen. iii. 24. Sinners will then be driven out with an expulsion much worse than that of Adam, which will easily appear if you compare them. Adam was driven out to till the ground, to eat bread; the ground only was cursed for his sake; coats of skins were provided for him, and intimations given of a Saviour, &c. But sinners are driven out at last, and no gleam of favour shall ever be manifested towards them. This is suffering exceeding *damage.* While the sinner lives he has tokens of God's good will, the comforts of this life, a place and a name in the visible church, and the offers of grace. This is the day of God's patience; they have sparing mercy; but then it will be *judg-ment without mercy*, James ii. 13. Every thing is denied in hell, Luke xvi. 25. The lost soul has lost every thing but its existence.

(2.) The lost soul will lie for ever under the *wrath of God.* Hell is the divine wrath resting upon a soul prepared by sin to be a vessel of that wrath. The soul is lost when those billows and waves go over it. The body will eventually have its share of woe; but the soul being the subject of sin, is to be the subject of wrath, Rom. ii. 8, 9. It is a destruc-tion flowing immediately from God's glorious power, 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. He that knows how to prepare a fire for devils, knows how to prepare it for souls. Who knows the power of God's anger, when it shall appear without any mercy to interpose? Rom. ix. 22. If one drop of this wrath get into the conscience at any time, what work does it make there, Job vi. 2, 3, &c. Ps. lxxxviii. 7, &c. even there, where there are principles of grace. O how dreadful will it be, when it shall be experienced in its full extent! Think what a being the soul is, and what a being God is, and you will say it must needs be a destruction past conception or expression. It must be thus, for the soul is an *intelligent* being, and therefore the more capable of misery. The soul stripped of the body, will understand its own misery, and the faculties will be enlarged to receive the pourings in of divine wrath. The soul is endued with a power of reflec-tion, and that will add greatly to the torment: see Luke xvi. 25. *Son, remember.* There are many things, the remembrance of which will add to the misery, especially the remembrance of sin, of mercy, and of opportunity. The soul is also an *immortal* being, and therefore the greater will be its misery. The soul's immortality will be the perpetuity of its woe. The soul once lost is lost for ever, and its re-demption ceaseth for ever. The fire is an everlast-ing fire; the worm dies not, because the soul dies not, Mark ix. 44. It is the crown of heaven's hap-piness, that its inhabitants cannot die any more; and the same is the complement of hell's misery. This makes it easeless, that it is endless, and reme-diless. Man is a living soul, and God the avenger

is a *living God*, and therefore there can be no period of the misery.

Show, II. What danger there is of this loss of the soul. Is it possible that such a noble being as the soul, should ever be thus miserable? Some calamities appear so dreadful as that we can hardly think them credible. Many people have such an excess of good nature, (as they call it,) that they cannot believe this concerning any of the children of men, that ever their souls should be lost; but the thing is no such foreign supposition. A lost soul is not a prodigy, one in an age; no, it is the case of multitudes that are gone down to the congregation of the dead, Prov. xxi. 16. and the danger of multitudes that are yet alive, and careless at the pit's brink.

1. It is possible that those who spend their days in mirth and wealth, may lose their souls, and be for ever miserable. It is possible for one that is clothed in purple and scarlet, to be in such an abyss of misery, as not to have a drop of water to cool his tongue, Luke xvi. 19, &c. It is possible for one that thinks he has goods laid up for many years, to have his soul required by devils, Luke xii. 19, 20. Riches profit neither in nor after the day of death. Those that were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living, may be thus brought down: see Isa. xiv. 9.

2. It is possible that those who live within the pale of the visible church, may lose their souls. A man that is called a disciple, and called a Christian, may be lost. It is possible that a man may be found among the wedding guests, and yet perish eternally for want of a wedding garment. It is possible for virgins to be found foolish, and to be excluded, Matt. xxv. 1.—for those that eat bread with Christ, and prophesied in his name, to be dismissed, Matt. vii. 22, 23. It is possible for Capernaum, that had been lifted up to heaven in means and mercies, to be cast down, Matt. xi. 23.

3. It is possible that those who were not far from the kingdom of God, yet may lose their souls: and that those who have promised fair, set out well, and have seemed to begin in the spirit, yet to end in the flesh, and to draw back unto perdition, Mark xii. 34. There were many who came out of Egypt, and yet came short of Canaan—Remember Lot's wife, Gen. xix. 26.

4. It is possible that those may lose their souls, who are very confident of the salvation of them. A man may think himself rich, Rev. iii. 17.—may step up to heaven's gate with that confidence, Matt. xxv. 11. and yet be disappointed. The hypocrite may have a hope that never perishes till it comes to the giving up of the ghost; a house that may stand till the storm comes, and he may lean on it. But what is the danger? Truly, great, if we consider,

(1.) That we are sinful, and deserve to be lost. We are sinners by nature, children of disobedience, and therefore children of wrath, Eph. ii. 3.—sinners by practice, and every sin has a tendency to the ruin of the soul. The guilt of committed sin merits this wrath; the power of indwelling sin prepares the soul for this destruction. There is a proneness in us to that which is evil. The way to hell is a broad way, and very agreeable to the corrupt nature. If the criminal be really guilty, you will say he is in danger. They know not themselves that think they are in no danger. The way to hell is downhill, Matt. vii. 13.

(2.) That God is righteous, and is engaged in honour to punish sin. We are ready to think, that because God is merciful no souls should perish; but is not his holiness, his beauty, as much as his goodness? If God were altogether such an one as ourselves, we might think there is no danger, Ps. l. 21.—but he is not so; he will by no means clear the impenitently guilty, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Better all should perish, than that there should be unrighteousness with God: see Josh. xxiv. 19, 20.

(3.) That the devil is very busy to deceive and destroy souls. He is a subtle enemy, Gen. iii. 1. a sworn enemy, an industrious enemy, 1 Pet. v. 8. not *what*, but *whom*. Give him the souls, and let who will take the goods. See what kind of enemies we have to grapple with, Eph. vi. 12. My soul is among lions, Ps. lvii. 4. Alas, master, (saith the prophet's servant,) what shall we do?

(4.) That Jesus Christ is very strict in his terms of saving souls. It is true there is a sufficiency both of merit and grace in Christ, for the preventing of this loss of the soul; he came to save souls, but they must be repenting and believing souls. He came to save souls from their sins, not in them, Matt. i. 21. He came to purify, and so to save. Salvation itself will not save those that neglect their souls: even the word of Christ will judge the disobedient, and he himself will have those slain that would not have him to reign over them, Luke xix. 27.

*Use* 1. If it be possible that souls may be lost, then we have reason to take it as a favour, that we have warning given to us. Where there is a real danger, it is good to be told of it, that we may escape it. We should reckon those our friends that would tell us of any danger to our bodies, much more, to our souls. Why then should we desire still to have smooth things prophesied to us, when smooth things are commonly deceitful, Isa. xxx. 10. Blame not ministers, then, who are earnest with you about your souls. We do it, knowing the terror of the Lord. 2 Cor. v. 11.—we do it out of a tender regard to souls, and to deliver our own souls, Ezek. xxxiii. 9. Count us not enemies then.

2. Then let us fear, Heb. iv. 1. It is possible our souls may be lost; and have we not reason then to be jealous over ourselves? This fear will be awakening to us, to make sure work in this matter, lest we perish with a lie in our right hand. You see there

danger, it is a matter of consequence, and in hich many have been deceived; let us therefore y ourselves and fear always, Prov. xxviii. 14. [any will lose their souls; many will come short of ernal life: *Lord, is it I?* If multitudes miscarry, is good to insure an interest in Christ. Be ruled y Christ, and he will insure your all to you, Heb. i. 7.

3. As it is possible that souls may be lost, so, bless-l be God, it is possible that souls may be saved; nd that is it which we should therefore make sure. he capacities of souls are such, that either they ill be eternally happy, or they will be eternally iiserable—and it should be our great concern to iake sure to ourselves that happiness, and to flee om that misery. It is possible our souls may be ost; but blessed be God, they are not lost yet—we ave yet a cast to throw for eternity. O let us iake sure work for our souls; and let this be our are, and desire, and prayer, Ps. xxxv. 3. *Say unto ıy soul, thou art my salvation.*

## SERMON III.

### Matthew xvi. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

Doctrine 3. That if the soul be lost, it is of the inner's own losing—*he loseth his own soul.* This is ıut implied here, that it is according to the sinner's wn choice, to hazard his own soul, and expose iimself to all this loss for the gaining of the world. But though it be only implied here, it is expressed lsewhere, and is a great truth, that the ruin of hose that perish is of themselves—wilful sinners ıre self-destroyers, Hos. xiii. 9. These losses must ie at our own door.

1. The damage of the soul in this world, is from inners themselves. Many that are delivered from ternal ruin, yet are very much damaged in their ouls, and it is their own fault. Which of us is there vhose spiritual interests have not been injured, and ve may thank ourselves.

(1.) It is a loss to the soul to be deprived of the avour of God, and that arises from ourselves, be-ause we do that which forfeits it, Isa. lix. 1, 2. Sin s a wall of partition between us and God, and it is ve ourselves that build up that wall. Hence sin is ompared to a cloud, a *thick cloud*, Isa. xliv. 22. The loud that separates between the earth and the sun, is made of vapours rising out of the earth—such is the cloud of sin, Jer. v. 25. We prefer other things before the favour of God, and do not seek it as we should, and so we come to want it. God *waits to be gracious* to us, but we are in the pursuit of *any good,* and so neglect him. He says, Seek ye my face, seek and ye shall find;—so that it is our own fault if we have it not.

(2.) It is an injury to the soul to be disquieted with the cares of this life, and that is of ourselves. The soul suffers damage by the inordinate pursuits of the things of this world; it is careful and troubled about many things, Luke x. 40, 41. it is divided by opposite objects, and it is often overwhelmed with grief for disappointments; and all this is of ourselves, because we are so foolish as to set our hearts upon these things. Men *pierce themselves through* with many sorrows, 1 Tim. vi. 10. It is of ourselves if we be disquieted with care, for we are invited to *cast our care* upon God, 1 Pet. v. 7. so that if we burthen ourselves with it, it is our own fault, we perplex ourselves.

(3.) It is a prejudice to the soul to be wounded and defiled by sin; and that is of ourselves. If the mind and conscience be wasted and defiled, it is our own doing—*Because of my foolishness*, saith David, Ps. xxxviii. 5. Sense of guilt cannot but be a terror to the soul, and cast a damp upon it. We are polluted in our own ways; see Ps. cvi. 39. Whatever present damage the soul sustains by reason of sin, we bring it on ourselves, and gain the harm and loss: see Jer. ii. 19; iv. 18. The soul is a great loser by every sin: it was sin that broke David's bones, and brought him into straits; and he might thank himself. What enemies are we to our own present peace, by the false steps we take!

(4.) It is hurtful to the soul to be unfitted for holy duties; and that is of ourselves. We have strength sufficient offered us, but we do not make use of it; we do not stir up the gift that is in us, and so we become weak and unstable as water, and cannot excel. We are deluded by this world; and so we are robbed of our strength ere we are aware. We live too far from Christ, and are confident in ourselves, and think we stand; and so we become weak, are foiled by temptation, and fail in every duty.

2. The damnation of the soul in the other world, is from sinners themselves. You have heard what a noble being the soul is, and what a deplorable loss the loss of the soul is; now whence is it that such an excellent being should be thus made miserable? It was once said of the English nation, that it could never be destroyed, unless it destroyed itself by its own intestine broils and animosities: and what is sin, but a broil in the soul itself, which becomes its own destroyer? The reason why sinners die, is because they will die, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. This is an awakening word; the Lord make it so to every one of us. There are great disputes about free-will, and how far that extends. The springs and motions of man's will are secret; but this is an undoubted truth concerning this matter, which we are to hold fast, That they that perish must take

all the blame to themselves, and they that are saved must give all the glory to God. That which I am to prove is, That those who perish, must take all the blame to themselves; for,

(1.) It can be laid upon no other. It is not any other that loses thy soul for thee. We are very apt to lay it upon others. It is an extenuation both of sin and ruin, to have some one upon whom to lay the blame, as Gen. iii. Adam laid it upon Eve, and Eve upon the serpent; but God said to each of them, What is this that thou hast done?

[1.] God is not at all chargeable with the damnation of those that perish; you cannot lay it upon him.

He has no hand in the sin of sinners. It is not God that tempts—Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, Jam. i. 13. It cannot be charged upon the *decree* of God; that doth not necessitate any man's sin. There is a decree that sinners shall die, but no decree that sinners shall sin. The vessels of mercy *he has prepared* for glory, but vessels of wrath are *fitted* to destruction, Rom. ix. 22, 23. fitted by their own sin. It cannot be charged upon any defect in the soul, as it comes out of God's hand: see Eccl. vii. 29. The soul is made capable of serving, and glorifying, and enjoying God. God doth not incline the will to sin; his hardening the hearts of sinners, is but his letting them alone, Hos. iv. 17. his giving them up to their own hearts' lusts, Ps. lxxxi. 12. his suffering all nations to walk in their own ways, Acts xiv. 16. is but his leaving them to themselves. His grace is his own, he is not debtor to any man, Rom. xi. 35. If the providence of God do concur to the action that is sinful, yet it doth not at all concur to the sinfulness of an action. It is true God made man's mouth, and in his hand our breath is; but if that mouth be set against the heavens, and that breath be threatening and slaughter, that is not God's work. He that speaketh a lie, like his father the devil, speaketh of his own. God permits sin, *i. e.* doth not hinder it by his sovereign power; but he has done all that became a good and righteous governor to prevent it. The king is not to be blamed if he promulge good and wholesome laws against treason, though he do not set a guard upon every man to keep him from committing it.

Nor has God any pleasure in the ruin of sinners. It is true, as a just governor, he has a hand in it; they fall immediately into his hand, but he has no pleasure in it, he doth not desire it; he has said this, Ezek. xviii. 32. He appeals to them who said his ways were not equal; they could not but know that he had no delight in the death of sinners, comparable to what he had in their salvation, Ezek. xviii. 23; xxxiii. 11. The ever-living God has even sworn this, that we might have strong consolation. He is not willing that any should perish, 2 Pet. iii. 9. It is no pleasure to the Almighty that he should afflict, much less that he should destroy. As a righteous governor, he will punish sin; but as a good God, he will not delight in the infliction of punishment. It is plain he has used all means to prevent the ruin, has exercised a great deal of patience and forbearance, and given fair warning.

[2.] The devil is not altogether chargeable with man's ruin. It is true he seeks our destruction, seeks whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8. but it is as true that he can but seek it, if we do not give him advantage, and betray ourselves to him. He wars against the soul, but he cannot take it, unless we surrender it to him.

He is an adversary, but he is an adversary that may be conquered. Multitudes have, by the grace of God, overcome the wicked one, 1 John ii. 14. If we put on the whole armour of God, though he fight against our souls, he cannot overcome them. He is an accuser, but we may have an advocate to answer his accusations. Christ has vanquished him, and it is our own fault if we do not pursue the victory.

He is a tempter, but he is a tempter that may be resisted, and he will flee, Jam. iv. 7. He may sift when God gives him leave, but it is our own chaff that then comes uppermost. He may say, Cast thyself down, Matt. iv. 6. but he cannot cast us down. He may do us a great deal of mischief by his access to our fancies, and his influence upon our imaginations, but he cannot force our wills. It is no sin to be tempted, and therefore not ruining. Get thee behind me Satan, repels his motions, and the shield of faith not only shelters us from, but quenches, his fiery darts—so that it is our own fault if we be overcome. The devil deceives, Rev. xx. 10. but it is because men are willing to be deceived.

(2.) It must therefore be laid upon the sinner himself—*Thou alone shalt bear it*, Prov. ix. 12. bear the loss, and bear the blame. If the soul be lost, it is of the sinner's own losing; for,

[1.] He does that which is destroying to the soul. The sin is from ourselves, and therefore the loss is. There is nothing we can truly call our own but sin; this is that which we brought into the world, and it is certain (if we continue in an unrenewed state) we shall carry it out; and it is not so with any thing else we have;—it is thy own iniquity.

Sin is the choice of the sinner's own will, his wicked will—We will walk *every one in his own way*, *i. e.* the way of his own choosing, Isa. lxv. 12. Sinners choose to walk in the way of lying and drunkenness, &c.—I have loved strangers, and after them I will go. Take away will, the wicked will, and you take away both guilt and hell. Good and evil are set before us, the good way of holiness on the one hand, the evil way of sin on the other hand; and we are told how much it is our own concern to choose the good; but we choose the evil, and so it comes to be our own act. We deceive ourselves, for the matter

laid very plain before us. You were called upon any a time not to do this abominable thing which ıe Lord hates, but ye would not hear—you chose ıe way of sinners, rather than the way of good men. Sin is the product of the sinner's own lust, the fruit ! the corrupt nature: see Jam. i. 14, 15. where you ave the origin of sin. That which defiles and destroys ıe man, proceedeth from within, out of the heart, [att. xv. 19, 20. it is a disease of which we brought ıe seed into the world with us; it comes out of the vil treasure of the heart, Matt. xii. 35. and it is this ıat is the loss of the soul. It is our own iniquity ıat lays us under the wrath of God, and makes us bnoxious to his curse. The wages of sin is death. Ve ourselves sow to the flesh, and thus we reap cor- ıption. It is sin that makes the sinner fuel to God's ıger, and kindles the fire which shall burn to the ›west hell. It is that bitter root which should have een plucked up, that bears all this gall and worm- ‹ood. It is sin that has the direct tendency to ruin, nd has been the destruction of thousands and ten housands of the children of Adam; that is the way ‹hich though it seem right, yet the end thereof is the ‹ays of death.

[2.] Man does not that which would be saving to he soul, and would prevent this ruin; and to this ıeglect his misery must be attributed. The sinner oses his own soul by preferring the world before Christ, and the good things that are seen that are emporal, before the great salvation. This is the uin of souls, that the salvation of the soul is not luly minded. The neglect of the soul is infallibly he losing of it. We are all by nature in a lost con- lition, and if something be not done towards our ecovery, we are eternally lost. Thus sinners lose heir souls, they spend those thoughts and cares in he pursuit of the world, which should be bestowed ın the soul, and so lose it.

And this through mere carelessness and neglect. Many things are lost by carelessness, and so are nany souls. Multitudes lose their souls for want ›f taking some thought about them; they know not he things that belong to their everlasting peace, till t is too late, Luke xix. 42. They are careful about nany things, but forget the one thing needful. Di- igent in the oversight of trifles, and at the same ime overlooking the most serious matters. There s no escape for those that *neglect* the great sal- ‹ation, Heb. ii. 3. neglect it as needless, or as small. Inconsideration is the ruin of thousands; they know not, neither do they understand, (Ps. lxxxii. 5.) and so they walk on in the darkness of sin, to the dark- ness of ruin. They know and believe that which, if duly considered and applied, would save them; but they have other things that they mind more: this is a very common case. O that you would hear my voice, ye careless ones. Is there any thing that either needs or deserves your care more than the salvation of your souls? have you not reason to keep them with all diligence? and will not your carelessness certainly speak you self-destroyers? Is not the eye of God upon you, an awful eternity before you, which depends on the present time?

Men also lose their souls through an obstinate refusal of the Saviour. As the wicked will chooseth the evil of sin, so the same wicked will refuseth the good of the Saviour;—it is refusing him that speak- eth from heaven, Heb. xii. 25. Those that refuse Christ ruin themselves.

They lose their own souls, for they turn a deaf ear to gospel calls; they are *willingly ignorant*, love darkness rather than light; they might, but will not, understand their need of Christ, and the way of sal- vation by him; they shut their eyes against the gos- pel discoveries of life and immortality. They study to drown the voice of the word with the noise of other things. They *sit in darkness*, a contented pos- ture. This affected ignorance will aggravate, and not excuse. They *stop their ears*, and this is often punished with a judicial deafness, Isa. vi. 10. Many are resolved to know as little as they can of Christ, lest the light disturb them.

Men also hold fast the deceit of sin. The wilful holding of the sin, is undoubtedly the wilful losing of the soul. They who retain sin are self-destroyers. Christ died to save us from sin, Matt. i. 21. from all iniquity, Tit. ii. 14. but they cannot find in their hearts to leave it. The gospel redemption is from a vain conversation, and this many like and love too well to quit. They nourish this serpent in their bosoms, and it leaves an eternal sting. They would be glad to keep Christ and their lusts too; but if one must be parted with, it shall be the Saviour, not their sins.

Nor will sinners come to Christ for life and sal- vation; he would save them, but they are not willing to be saved. He is come that men might have life, John x. 10. but sinners will not come to him for it— here the blame lies, John v. 40. They do not like the life that is offered to them—a spiritual life, a life of holiness, and love, and communion with God; they do not relish it; they see no beauty in Christ. There are other things that they like better, and are taken up with—their farms and their merchandise, Matt. xx. 5.—and they desire to be excused.

They will not use the means prescribed and ap- pointed for the salvation of the soul, and so they lose their souls. They will not read the Scriptures, nor pray, nor sanctify the sabbath, nor join themselves with the Lord's people. They lose their souls be- cause they will not save themselves from an ungodly course. They are not for troubling themselves with these things; they look upon them as mean, or hard, or needless. They are bid, as Naaman was, to wash in Jordan, but they prefer the rivers of Da- mascus; and think all this anxiety unnecessary.

They will not have Christ to reign over them, and so they lose their souls; for Christ will not save, nay, he will destroy, those that he shall not rule, Luke xix. 27. They like Christ and his crown well enough, but they do not like Christ and his yoke. They will not submit to be his subjects, and so they are treated as his enemies. There is in many who profess religion, a secret dislike of the power of religion; close and strict walking with God, they cannot approve.

Nor will they part with this world and their portion in it, and so they lose their souls: that is the case supposed in the text. The soul lost for the gaining, or perhaps the keeping, of the world. They refuse to part with the world for Christ, as he that had *great possessions*, Matt. xix. 22. Ps. xvii. 14. They cannot persuade themselves to leave, lay out, or lose, that which they have set their hearts upon;—it is the piece of ground, and the yoke of oxen, that lose the soul. They will be rich, and thus they are ruined.

*Use* 1. This will for ever justify God in the condemnation of those that perish. Believe this, and say, The Lord is righteous, and let this tend to reconcile the ruin of so many souls with the goodness of God; let this stop every mouth, Rom. iii. 19. and convince and silence all that are ungodly, Jude 14. See Matt. xxii. 12. he was *speechless*. The heavens will then declare God's righteousness, and all the world will say, that just and true are his ways: for sinners die, only because they will die; they choose their own delusions. Would you have them saved against their wills? The present day of divine patience will justify God in the approaching day of his wrath. The justice of God in the whole proceeding will be manifested in the great day, Ps. li. 4. See this insisted upon, Prov. i. 24, &c. Isa. lxvi. 4. And that which justifies God, will satisfy the saints, who will have nothing to say against it. If after all the means used, the barren tree continue such, *cut it down*—not a word more to say for it, Luke xiii. 9.

2. This will for ever aggravate the destruction of sinners, and will make it so much the more intolerable. Son, remember, Luke xvi. 25.—remember that you brought this upon yourselves; this you may thank yourselves for. The remembrance of the sin will be the aggravation of the misery, especially the recollection, that when time was, it might have been prevented. There was a fair offer made of life and salvation, but it was rejected for a trifle: thou wilt *mourn at the last*, and say, how have I hated instruction. This will sharpen the teeth of the never-dying worm, Mark ix. 44. Listen to the complaints of poor lost sinners, and let that frighten you from that way which leads down to the chambers of death. The greater advantages any had to escape this ruin, the more intolerable will it be, Matt. xi. 21, &c. I speak these things to warn you.

3. Pity and pray for those that you see thus destroying their own souls, and if you can do any thing, have compassion upon them, and help them. See their condition to be very painful, but not yet desperate; while there is life there is hope. If you saw a distracted man ready to drown himself, you would do what you could to hinder him;—and can you do nothing to save a soul *from death*, Jam. v. 20. to snatch a soul as a brand out of everlasting burnings. Say to sinners, as Paul did to the jailer, *Do thyself no harm*, Acts xvi. 28. pray earnestly for such. However, take heed of doing that which might further any in this self-destruction. If you cannot help to save their souls, beware of aiding their ruin by hardening them in sin, or tempting them to it; or having fellowship with them, lest you bear sin for them, Lev. xix. 17. and be found partakers of other men's sins, and then of their plagues. It concerns every one, as well as ministers, to keep themselves clear from the blood of all men, Acts xx. 26.

4. Admire the patience and forbearance of God, that we who have been so long destroying ourselves, are not yet destroyed—especially if we be in a hopeful way to salvation. It is no thanks to us, but it is merely *of the Lord's mercies*. If God had not been better to us than we have been to ourselves, we had been in hell long ago, Lam. iii. 32. There are riches of goodness and forbearance in God's dealing with those that *treasure up wrath*, Rom. ii. 4, 5. especially if God has not only spared thee, but saved thee with a great salvation: This magnifies the riches of free grace; when we were hastening to destruction, we were then stopped. God had pity on us when we had no pity on ourselves; in him was our help found, when we were destroying ourselves, Hos. xiii. 19. Not unto us, therefore, not unto us, but to the grace of God be all the glory. This does for ever exclude boasting, for we could destroy ourselves, but we could not save ourselves. How much are we indebted, and what shall we render?

5. Then let every one of us be *wise for ourselves*, and not lose our own souls. My errand to you is, to bring you this serious caution, Men and brethren, do not ruin yourselves; you act rationally in other things, and do not run yourselves upon danger, and why so foolish in this great affair? *Why will ye die?* This is used as the great argument why we should repent, and turn, Ezek. xviii. 31; xxxiii. 11. Thus does God condescend to reason the case with us; and what argument can be more powerful? Be not self-destroyers; be not such enemies to yourselves and to your eternal interests. Consider what the losing of the soul is, and what the salvation of it is; what that death is which you make so light of, and what that life is which is proposed to you. Surely, in dealing with sinners, we have all the reason that can be on our side. Let reason rule you, and show yourselves men.

If you would not lose your souls, have an eye upon

them, be deeply concerned about them; watch over your souls, and take good heed to them. There then begins to be some hope of salvation, when men begin to be thoughtful about their souls.

If you would not lose your souls, you must leave your sins, for sin will be the ruin of the soul. Cast away from you all your transgressions, Ezek. xviii. 31. Hate sin, and abandon it as an enemy to your souls, from a principle of right self-love, though it be a beloved sin: see Matt. v. 29, 30.

If you would not lose your souls, you must commit them to God, through the Mediator. Give your hearts to God, who is the rightful sovereign of the heart, Prov. xxiii. 26. Give them up to God, to be ruled by his laws, sanctified by his Spirit, and renewed according to his image. Finally,

If you would not suffer the loss of your souls, you must be willing to suffer the loss of all things, that you may win Christ, Phil. iii. 8. Make sure your interest in him; accept of him; live looking unto Jesus, and you shall be with him for ever.

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## SERMON IV.

### MATTHEW xvi. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

DOCTRINE 4. That the soul is more worth than all the world. The soul of man is a jewel of inestimable value. This is plainly intimated here, where the loss of the soul is represented as such a loss that the gain of all the world will not be a compensation for it. Observe here,

1. What those things are that are here compared—*the whole world*, and *thy own soul*; these are here put into the scales against one another. The world here means not the universe, or the whole creation, that is more excellent than any one part, but the things that are seen that are temporal, 2 Cor. iv. 18. the riches, honours, and pleasures, of this present time. See a map of this world, 1 John ii. 16. Now the *whole world* is here set in the balance against one soul, if that one be thy one. It is not a small estate, or a lordship, that is here supposed to be of less value than the soul, but the world, the whole world. Our temporal concernments are compared with our spiritual, the *life that now is, and that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8.

2. What judgment is here passed upon them—That our own souls are of infinitely more value than the whole world. The value of a thing is reckoned partly by its nature and intrinsic dignity, and partly by its use. That is most valuable, that is most delightful, most profitable, and most necessary. We reckon that is most worth, that is most worth to us. Now our own souls are more to us than all the world is or can be. The design of this is to show of what little worth the world is, and the things of the world: they are weighed in the balance, and found wanting; not worthy to be compared, or to be named, with the soul: see Rom. viii. 18.

3. Who it is that passeth this judgment. It is our Lord Jesus himself, one who had reason to know the worth of souls, for he made them, and bought them; and who (we may be sure) would not underrate the world, for by him *the worlds were made*, Col. i. 16. Heb. i. 2. This doctrine I shall endeavour,

I. To prove—That our own souls are more to us than all the world. How insufficient all the world will be to make up the loss of the soul, we shall have occasion to show under the 6th doctrine, (if the Lord will,) at present, I shall endeavour to show the true worth of the soul. To prove this, consider,

1. The *production* of the soul. Trace it up to its original; and it is breathed into us by the breath of God; it is a spark of heaven; it is that part of man by which he is allied to the world of spirits; it is the masterpiece of God's workmanship in this lower world: see Gen. ii. 7. The image of God is stamped upon it, Gen. i. 26, 27. When it returns to God, it doth but as all the waters do, return to the place from whence it came. It is of a noble extraction. That which makes up the world, that men covet so much, is but of the earth, earthy:—honour is a shadow; the pleasures of the world and the wealth of the world are of the earth; gold and silver are but refined earth—Man found thee poor and dirty in a mine, *Herbert*. But man was made last of all the creatures, as the chief of the works of God. It is good for us often to ask whence we came; and being so nobly descended, disdain to serve the base and sordid lusts of the flesh, and to prostitute an immortal soul to the drudgery of this world.

2. The *powers* of the soul. These are very great; its apprehensions are not confined by the horizon of sense, but rove far beyond it. The faculties of the human soul are such as (above any other creature) prove the eternal power and wisdom of the Creator. It is *the soul* that knows right well how marvellous God's works are, Ps. cxxxix. 14. by reflection upon itself. Think what the soul of man is capable of, and you will say that it is of inestimable value.

(1.) It is capable of glorifying God in this world. It has a power of knowing God, as he has been pleased to reveal himself. It is that which is within us, that renders us capable of blessing and praising God, Ps. ciii. 1, 2. It is capable of *knowledge*, in which, especially, the image of God consists, Col. iii. 10. It is capable of reasoning and *bringing to mind*, Isa. xlvi. 8. It is capable of receiving a divine revelation to this purpose, and in the use of instituted ordinances is capable of *having fellowship*

with God—of being wrought upon, and witnessed with, by the Holy Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 16. It is capable of being *sanctified*.

(2.) It is capable of being glorified with God in the other world; of seeing and enjoying him within the veil; of conversing with angels and glorified spirits, and drinking in the sweet and glorious rays of divine grace and love; things which are above, out of the sight of sense. It has a power of doing that, which the body, till it is refined and become a spiritual body, is not able to attain. It is capable of seeing God face to face, which an embodied soul, till stripped of this veil, cannot possibly do, Exod. xxxiii. 20.

(3.) The *perpetuity* of the soul. This is one great thing which speaks the worth of the soul—that it is to last for ever, it is an immortal spirit. It is a flame that can never be extinguished. It will survive the body, and will live and act in a state of separation from it. It is one of those things which are not seen, but are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 18. It is an awful consideration, when a child is born, to think, here is the beginning of a being that will outlive all the ages of time. The world is but for a moment, Prov. xxiii. 5. the fashion of it, the scheme, the outside of it, (for it is but a superficies,) *passeth away*, 1 Cor. vii. 31. 1 John ii. 17. But the soul is perpetual; the things themselves towards which its desires extend, and those desires that are so formed, are eternal. The brute creatures are mortal, but man will be immortal. This makes it such a serious thing for a man to die, above what it is for a beast to die, Eccl. iii. 21. Things are reckoned valuable according to their duration. Gold therefore is the most precious metal, because it will not rust nor waste; but the utmost of the duration of this world's goods is within time.

(4.) The *propriety* of our souls—*thy own soul*. In order to ascertain the right value of a thing, it must be considered, not only what the thing is in itself, but what interest we have in it. The loan of a thing is nothing so valuable as the possession of it. Now the world is but lent us; whatever we have in it, it is not to be called our own; but our souls are our own. We brought them into the world, and we shall carry them out—they are our own, they are, in fact, ourselves. The soul is the man. What is man but a *living soul*? Gen. ii. 7. Abstract the soul as living, and the body is a lump of clay; abstract the soul as rational, and the man is as the beasts that perish. It is a certain truth, that the soul is the man. *Persons*, in Scripture, are often reckoned by souls, as Acts ii. 41. What we are, is more to us than what we have. It is the spirit that is the substance of the man; and what is the chaff to the wheat, the shell to the kernel, the clothes to the body? This is one of the first things that the convinced sinner is made sensible of—that the soul is the man; and if he would do well for himself, he must do well for his soul.

(5.) The *projects* that are laid about souls. There is great work about souls, more than you think of. That is valuable which those that are intelligent are concerned about. This speaks the soul of man to be of very great value. Consider,

[1.] What projects the love of God has to save souls. The God of infinite wisdom, whose the worlds are, has been pleased to concern himself with a peculiar care about the world of mankind, the world of souls. Some observe, that in Scripture, God is never brought in consulting with himself, but when man is concerned. God has thoughts *to us-ward*, Ps. xl. 5. Infinite Wisdom was from eternity devising means that poor banished souls might not be for ever expelled, Eph. i. 11. compare v. 9. God had thoughts of love to the sons of men, *i. e.* the souls of men, before the worlds were.

[2.] What projects the malice of Satan has to destroy souls. It is a sign the soul of man is very precious, when God and Satan, those two adverse powers, are as it were contending for it. He seeks to get and keep possession of the soul, that he may devour it, 1 Pet. v. 8. The great dispute between Michael and the dragon is, who shall rule the souls of men. The devil's agents trade in the *souls of men*, Rev. xviii. 13. The devil saith, as the king of Sodom, Gen. xiv. 21. *Give me the souls*. There is great stirring about the soul.

(6.) The *price* that was paid to redeem souls. We reckon the value of a thing by that which a wise man will give for it, who is not ignorant of it, nor under necessity. Christ, the wisdom of God, gave himself, his own precious blood, to redeem souls, and he knew what they were, and had no need of them. The redemption of the *soul is precious*, Ps. xlix. 8. Corruptible things, as silver and gold, would not do: then did Christ, for us men and for our salvation, make his soul an offering, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. *His soul was an offering* for ours, his life a *ransom* for many, Matt. xx. 28. See here the worth of souls—nothing could be a ransom for forfeited souls, but the *blood* of the Son of God. Lo I come, saith he—for us men and for our salvation, saith the Nicene creed. Neither the fruit of the body, nor the fruit of the estate, would atone for the *sin of the soul*, Mic. vi. 7. but Christ gave himself. Blood of bulls and goats would not do. God proves the excellency of his people by this, Isa. xliii. 4. *I will give men for thee*;—much more doth it demonstrate the excellency of souls, when God gave his Son for them. The blood of Christ is precious blood, of immense value.

(7.) The *pains* that are taken to renew souls. God hath manifested his favour to man in the provision made for his body, that that might be put into, and kept in, a capacity to answer the end of its creation. See the first instance of this care, Gen. i. 29. and

afterwards, Gen. ix. 3. But there is a great deal more done to provide for the soul, and to put that into, and keep that in, a capacity to answer the ends of its creation. The power of God is wonderfully exerted in this important work, to sanctify a soul, to recover it from its degenerate state, to reduce it to its integrity, and to prepare it for glory. The word of God is given for these ends, that mighty word, which is so quick and powerful, Heb. iv. 12. The Spirit of God is at work for the good of the soul—the arm of the Lord is revealed—and the work of faith fulfilled with power. These things show what a value God puts upon souls. A word made us, but far more is required to new-make us.

(8.) The *preparations* that are made to receive souls. There is much in progress for them in the other world. Souls being immortal, have immortal things provided for them.

There are preparations of wrath for sinful souls, to which they are *reserved*, 2 Pet. ii. 9. There is a Tophet that is ordained of old, Isa. xxx. 33. an everlasting fire, that is prepared for the devil and his angels, is reserved for wicked men, Matt. xxv. 41. It is sealed up among his treasures, treasures of wrath, after the long season of his patience.

And there are preparations of glory for sanctified souls. These must needs be of great value, when there is so much laid out to make them great and happy. They have a glory proportioned to their capacities. Knowledge and love are the principal faculties of the soul; and these are sources of bliss in heaven.

II. I shall improve this subject. The serious consideration of the worth of our souls should have a mighty influence upon us to make us religious; for what is religion but a concern about the present and the future state of our souls? The practice of serious godliness is that, and that only, which befriends the soul both in its present and its eternal interests. What is it that we are persuading you to in all our preaching, but to mind your souls and do well for your souls?

Be convinced that you have souls, every one of you. Consider thyself. Thou hast a mortal body and an immortal soul. Most men live as if they had no souls, no souls by which to be *governed*, and no souls for which to *provide*. They discover nothing truly rational, they have no concern for what is immortal. But I hope better things of you, or else I shall never hope any good of you. It is not enough to gainsay this truth, but you must *consider* it.

Be convinced of the worth of your souls. It is no breach of the law of humility to put a value upon our own souls, and to think so well of ourselves as to think ourselves too good to serve sin. Value the body less and the soul more, and it would be better for you. There are some important inferences which may be drawn from these things.

1. *If the soul* be so precious, then those are our best friends that are *friends to our souls*, and we should look upon them as such. The best friend to souls that ever was, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the soul. Look upon him as a good friend, and prize him accordingly. Study what you shall render for his love. The good Shepherd is the *Shepherd of our souls*, 1 Pet. ii. 25. He laid down his life for our souls, and has provided food, and healing, and rest for them: let our souls love him. Faithful ministers are friends to your souls, Heb. xiii. 17. Their work is to watch for them. Look upon reprovers as friends to your souls, and reckon friendly rebukes as kindness. They are so, Ps. cxlv. 5. They help to prevent sin, and save the soul from death. Let them find more favour now, for they will afterwards appear more kind than flatterers. Those that instruct you and comfort you are friends to your souls. Show yourselves to be friends to the souls of others. Do all the good you can to the souls of those with whom you are connected. Be concerned for the souls of your children and servants; gain their souls, by guiding them to God.

2. If the soul be so precious, then those are our worst enemies that are enemies to our souls. The devil is the great enemy to our souls; he is the tempter, and so is the *destroyer*, and he has his agents, that are busy to ruin souls. There are persons and things that war against the soul, 1 Pet. ii. 11. the worst war that can be: those that seduce the soul and beguile it, 2 Pet. ii. 54. that tempt us to sin; that lay stumbling blocks before us; that entice us secretly, though they pretend love;—look upon them as enemies to your souls. David complains often of those that did persecute his soul. Wicked companions are real enemies to the soul; therefore say to such, *Depart*, Ps. cxix. 115. Enemies to the soul are very subtle, Eph. vi. 12. Therefore we have the more need to stand upon our guard. Consider how precious that soul is which they would injure and destroy.

3. If the soul be so precious, then mercies to the soul are the choicest mercies, for which we should pray most earnestly. This is the favour that God bears unto his chosen. The hallowing of God's name by us, and the coming of his kingdom into us, are mercies to the soul which are to be desired above all others,—that is the order in the Lord's prayer: see Matt. v. 33. The renewing of the soul, and the saving of the soul, are things that must have the pre-eminence in our desires and prayers. Other mercies must be begged with a proviso, but mercies to the soul absolutely. Be more earnest for these than for corn, and wine, and oil, Psal. iv. 6, 7. wrestle with God for these, as Jacob did. Be more concerned in prayer about your sins than your afflictions. So likewise we must be most thankful to God for spiritual mercies, Eph. i. 3.—redeeming love, gospel grace, see Ps. ciii. 3, *&c.* Value every mercy by the reference that it has to the soul, and be

thankful for it accordingly: see Isa. xxxviii. 17. *In love to my soul.* Go by this rule in your valuation of public mercies;—reckon those the *best times* that are opportunities for the soul, in which there are plenty of the means of grace.

4. If the soul be so precious, then judgments upon the soul are the sorest judgments. Spiritual plagues are of all others the worst, and to be most dreaded, as *leanness in the soul*, Ps. cvi. 15. when the mind is blinded, the conscience seared, the heart hardened, and the reins laid on the neck of sinful passions. These are spiritual judgments, Isa. vi. 9, 10. Ps. lxxxi. 12. the worst condition a man can be on this side hell. How sad would our condition be, if we were deprived of both the bodily senses of seeing and hearing, (such instances have rarely been heard of,) but much worse to have the soul blind and deaf. Do not provoke God to deny and withdraw his grace. There are judgments upon the soul too, that sometimes befall God's own children, and they are very painful; as—when the terrors of God set themselves in array against them, Job vi. 4. Ps. lxxxviii. 3. &c. and he wounds the spirit, Prov. xviii. 14. If God has kept us from these terrors, we must be thankful, but not secure. Our Lord Jesus suffered in his soul, that he might have compassion, Matt. xxvi. 38.

5. If the soul be so precious, then the prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity. There is such a thing as soul prosperity, 3 John 2. and it is that which we should most earnestly desire of God, both for ourselves and for our friends. The soul prospers when it is in a good state, and in a good frame, when it is in the right way, and when it grows in grace; as the body prospers that is in health, and as the estate prospers that increases. That is a prosperous soul that is adding grace to grace, and securing not only an entrance, but an abundant entrance, into the kingdom of God, 2 Pet. i. 5. The soul prospers when its holy dispositions are lively, its comforts strong, and its evidences clear—when it is walking in the light, and singing in the ways, of the Lord. Seek this as the best prosperity. Soul prosperity either brings outward prosperity along with it, Matt. vi. 33. or sweetens the want of it; and it is that which all the malice of hell and earth cannot disturb or take away.

6. If the soul be so precious, then we are to look upon that condition as best for us which is best for our souls. That is best for us that is most free from temptations, and that gives us the greatest advantages for spiritual things. That relation is best for us that is best for our souls. Look upon this as a reason why we should be content under afflictions, because they tend to the good of our souls. Though the flesh be destroyed, yet if the spirit be thereby saved, it is well enough, 1 Cor. v. 5. see Heb. xii. 9. Sanctified afflictions are the soul's promotions;—the chastening is bad for the body, but the teaching that attends it is good for the soul, Ps. xciv. 12; cxix. 71. Submit willingly to that which is for the good of the soul, though it be displeasing to flesh and blood.

7. If the soul be so precious, then they are fools that *despise their own souls.* There are those that do so, Prov. xv. 32. This is the fundamental error of sinners,—they despise this jewel of value, which Christ put such a value upon. Let us see who they are that despise their own souls:

(1.) Those that make a light matter of sin despise their own souls, Prov. xiv. 9. It is certain that sin is a wrong to the soul, Prov. viii. 36. How do people regard their souls that abuse them thus every day? Those that expose their precious souls to the wrath and curse of the eternal God, every day, by wilful sin, do not value them as they should. Those despise their souls that continue in unbelief and impenitency, and will not be awakened to see the misery in which their souls are; they feel nothing from sin, the sins of so many years; they are not concerned, though their souls be ready to drop into everlasting burnings. They despise their souls that rush into sin, Jer. viii. 6. that run upon God, Job xv. 25, 26. There are some so daring as to challenge God himself to damn them. They despise their souls that, when they have fallen into sin, make no haste to repent and turn from it.

(2.) Those that take up with a cheap and easy religion despise their own souls; that are afraid of doing too much for their own souls. Did we put a right value upon our souls, we should object to no pains or care for the securing of their welfare. We should go from strength to strength; we should give diligence to add to our graces, and thus make our calling and election sure, 2 Pet. i. 5—10. But those that only inquire, will not less serve? manifest that they despise their souls: they labour at the world, and sleep at an ordinance; they crowd their religion into a corner, and make not a business, but a by-business, of it. What account do such make of their souls, who will scarce go over the threshold to hear a sermon; they *refuse instruction.* He that is slothful in work for his soul, is brother to him that is a great waster.

(3.) Those that are prodigal of their time despise their own souls. Time is an opportunity of doing something for the soul, and is to be redeemed accordingly, Eph. v. 16. because there is an eternity depends upon it. Time may be well spent, either in doing something for God with the soul, or in getting something from God for the soul; yet with many their time is a drug. What value do those put upon their souls, that fill up their time with mere recreation, and all this while neglect their souls? Every day might be a harvest day for the soul, but it is idled away; the time of the morning and evening sacrifice stolen away by one idle companion or other. Value your souls, and you will value your time.

:.) Those that make themselves drudges to the ld despise their own souls. The soul should be darling, but many make it a slave, and send it ecd swine, Luke xv. 15. and to provide for the ı, Rom. xiii. 14. Those that are eager in pursuit worldly wealth despise their souls, not only be- se the soul is neglected and the body preferred ıre it, but because it is employed in these pur- s, Ps. cxxvii. 2. Care about the world fills the and disquiets it. It is a great disparagement n immortal soul, to be thus wholly employed.

ɔ.) Those that by sin unfit their bodies to aid r souls in the service of God despise them. Drunk- ess especially does this, it *overcharges* the heart, :e xxi. 34. Those put a great slight upon their ls that drown them in wine and strong drink, suffer their hearts thus to be taken away, and nselves to be put out of possession of them. They :e beasts of themselves, only to please a sensual ıetite. They are not their own masters—to govern nselves, and by degrees come to be not their own ɔ—to understand themselves.

6.) Those that venture their souls upon a false l deceitful foundation despise them. What we ue we shall be sure to lay up in a safe place, and t which we despise we shall venture any where. ɔse that build their hopes upon the sand, Matt. . 26. that presume upon their visible profession, l are willing to take it for granted, without any ict scrutiny, that all is well with them, Rev. iii.

Such have a low opinion of their own souls, l must necessarily end in a painful manner; their ɔe must perish.

7.) Those that take up with a portion in this life, ıpise their own souls—who think that will serve m for a happiness which neither suits the nature a soul, nor will last so long as the soul will last; ıt take up with that for a portion which doth but the belly, Ps. xvii. 14. And when they have a at deal of the world say, Soul, take thine ease, ke xii. 19. And take these for their good things, ke xvi. 25. Let not us despise our own souls, let desire a better portion for them than the world, en an interest in his love, whose favour is the ety and the felicity of all who truly seek him.

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## SERMON V.

### MATTHEW xvi. 26.

*ɔr what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

OCTRINE 5. That the *gaining of the world* is lentimes the *losing of the soul*. This is plainly ıplied here, that the methods men take for the ining of the world, are the things which commonly ove destructive to the soul: many precious souls are ruined for ever by the love of this world. This is that which has slain its *thousands* and its *ten thousands*. Hence it is that so many precious souls are irrecoverably lost. The world was the rock they split upon; the world was the enemy that conquered them. We are told what the world is that is so pernicious to souls, 1 John ii. 16. In the things of the world three things are included:

1. The *pomp* of the world—honour, preferment, making a figure in the world, a fair show in the flesh, Gal. vi. 12. The gaining of this poor reputation is often the losing of the soul. To be looked upon as some great one, is a thing very much affected by many, and I am apt to think that more young people are ruined both here and hereafter by pride, than by any one thing in this world. It is thought a desirable thing to look fine, and to be in the way of preferment. Many lose the weight of glory in the other world, by and for the dream and shadow of this world's glory. This was it that Moses by faith conquered, Heb. xi. 24.

2. The *pleasures* of the world the lusts of the flesh, that in the world which gratifies the sensual appetite. This is that which many love more than God, 2 Tim. iii. 4. and live in, 1 Tim. v. 6. The gaining of the world is the *finding* of our *own pleasure* in it, as Luke xvi. 19. and Luke xii. 19. We reckon those the darlings of the world, that spend their days in mirth and their years in pleasure, and know not what care and sorrow mean; that lie upon beds of ivory, &c. Amos vi. 4—6. to be able to make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the desires of it. This is *the world*, the smiles and indulgences of it; this is that, the love of which is oft the ruin of the soul. When men cannot deny the sensual appetite, but will walk in the way of their heart, this defiles and this destroys the soul.

3. The *profits* of the world. These are desired usually for the sake of the two former, though there are some that love wealth only for its own sake, and it is a sore evil, Eccl. vi. 1, 2. The world men are in love with, is an increasing estate. It is the *love of money* that is put for the love of this world, 1 Tim. vi. 10. for that is said to *answer all things*, Eccl. x. 19. that is, all temporal things; it will not answer the needs of the soul. He that had goods laid up for many years, promised himself a full stream of carnal delights—to eat, and drink, and be merry.

This is *the world*. Now I am to show how the gaining of the world is oft the losing of the soul—how these worldly things undo us; and the opening of this will be of use for caution, that being warned of the danger, we may be armed against it.

I. I shall show how the gaining of the world is often the losing of the soul.

1. Many lose their souls in endeavouring to obtain the world. There is an endeavour about the world, that is very well consistent with the saving of the soul,

even honest diligence in a lawful calling, Prov. xxvii. 23, &c. Every one must mind his own business, and labour that he may have to give, Eph. iv. 28. And in this our eyes must be towards God, and our common actions done after a godly sort, with a single eye to the will and glory of God. But there is a pursuit after the world which is destructive to the soul: see that full scripture in general, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.

(1.) The inordinacy of the desire after the world is fatal. When men pursue the world from a principle of love to it, and value for it, as the best and chief good, and the highest end of man, this will certainly lose the soul. When present things are made our good things, Luke xvi. 25. our consolation, our reward, our portion, Ps. xvii. 14. this sinks the soul. When the principle of our worldly pursuits is, that we may honour God, and do good, this sanctifies them; but when it is because we look upon them as glory, Gen. xxxi. 1. and as that in which the happiness of the soul consists, this is altogether inconsistent with grace, and a regard to God. It is idolatry, Col. iii. 5. Eph. v. 5. it is having another God before him; it is adultery, Jam. iv. 4. it is enmity against God and the cross of Christ, Phil. iii. 18, 19. God and mammon are opposite masters, Matt. vi. 24. Many souls have been lost that have never run into an excess of riot, by an habitual delight in this world as the best good, Ps. iv. 6. We have all reason here to suspect ourselves: see Rom. viii. 6. The man is as his mind is.

(2.) The irregularity of the pursuits of the world is often fatal. Where the heart is set upon the things of the world, as the best things, they will be sought and laboured for accordingly, Ps. cxxvii. 2. And in these pursuits,

Christ and gospel grace are slighted. Men are too busy making other bargains, and have no heart nor time to attend to Christ. They do not find that repentance and faith, the love of God, and the promises of the covenant, will secure their worldly wealth and glory; and therefore, (whatever others do,) for their parts they will not trouble themselves with such things. These are things far above out of their sight, Ps. x. 5. they have nothing to say against these things; but with them other things preponderate. Time enough to think of these things upon a sick bed: see this set forth in two parables, Matt. xxii. 5. and Luke xiv. 16, &c. They have no thoughts to spare for another world, they are so much taken up with this: careful and troubled about many things, while the one thing needful is postponed, Luke x. 41, 42. The vigour of the soul is quite exhausted in the pursuit of the world, that in the service of God it is become but a dry tree.

Necessary duties also are neglected through worldly pursuits. Many for the gaining of the world omit the doing of that, which their own consciences tell them they ought to do. Prayer is a needful duty, the soul is certainly lost without it; but those that are eager upon the world, cannot find time to pray—they say to the Almighty, Depart: see Job xxi. 11, 15. They are not for those duties which produce no earthly gain. Their books of trade take up their time and thoughts so much, that God's book is laid aside. Those that are eager in pursuit of the world, cannot find in their hearts to lose one day in seven.

Destroying sins are in the same way ventured upon. Many, to get something of the world, make bold with sin, to the dishonour and ruin of the soul. Foolish and hurtful lusts, wealth gotten by vanity, riches gotten and not by right, Jer. xvii. 11. and treasures of wickedness, attend these persons, and bring them to destruction. Many a man damns his soul, to make himself what the world terms a gentleman. What is more destructive than the commission of sin as the means of increasing wealth? Many men, to get some little of the world, oppress the poor, and defraud their neighbours. Many people are tempted to think that it is no sin, or next none, to tell a lie in the way of their trade, when there is something to be gotten by it, and they know nobody can contradict them. The common excuse is, there is no driving a trade without it; but if it be sin, it is destroying to the soul, and will be found so at last. Many that are eager upon the world, make no conscience what they say, nor what they do, nor who they abuse or trample upon. How injurious to the soul are many of the conditions of getting gain! When the favour of great men is to be had clogged with sinful conditions, and these are complied with, conscience being bribed to say nothing against it; this is dear bought gain, Matt. xxvi. 15. *What will ye give me?* was the question of Judas to Christ's enemies. Micah's Levite will become priest to an idol for preferment, Judg. xvii. 10. Many have been hired to forswear themselves, to murder, to commit adultery; and what evil is it of which the love of money has not been the root. Many have sold the truth, and with it their souls, for the world, Prov. xxiii. 23.

2. Many lose their souls for the keeping of the world. This must come into the consideration of the gaining of the world. The gaining of the world is much the same with the *saving of the life*, v. 25. This is a pernicious branch of covetousness, and fatal to the soul. As grasping at the world is dangerous, so is inordinate attachment to it when we have got it.

The complacency men take in worldly objects, becomes a principle of action fatal to the interests of the soul. To be rich and great upon earth, they consider as the most desirable of all things. The soul rests in this poor advancement, as its portion and happiness too; it is at home in the world, and takes its ease in the world. Why do men so solicitously

: what they have gathered, and hold it so fast, because they say, *Blessed is the people that is in a case?* Ps. cxliv. 15. It is a sign of prevailing rust of the Creator, and of prevailing delight in, dependence upon, the creature. What is this but ng up our *treasure* in these things? Matt. vi. 19. ıan will not spend his treasure, but keep it up. at is this but *setting* our *affections* on things beth? Col. iii. 2. it is reposing the soul in them.

he practice arising from this principle is fatal. ny ruin their own souls,

lecause they cannot find in their hearts to *lose* things of the world for God. When these two ıe in competition, that either they must deny rist or forego pleasure or worldly wealth, they ose rather to deny Christ. Here is the world won l the soul lost, see an instance in Demas, 2 Tim. 10. When the receiving the mark of the beast beoes the condition of buying and selling and get- gain, as sometimes it is, Rev. xiii. 17. and then n comply with their condition, they forsake the ths and ways of Christ, which formerly they prosed. This has been the case of many that have fully apostatized: they could not endure to see spoiling of their goods. Christ was dear, but world was dearer, and therefore, farewell Christ. rist and his truths must be cast overboard rather ın they would make shipwreck of an estate: see hn xii. 42, 43. they cannot endure hardness and grace. These persons also injure their souls,

Because they cannot *lay out* the things of the rld for God. He will not have us to hoard what ıers want. We are commanded to be charitable, give alms of such things as we have. Many souls : ruined by uncharitableness: see Matt. xxv. 41,

People think what they do in charity is not of cessity, but a work of supererogation; whereas it our rent to God. So likewise in works of piety; ıny cannot submit to charges for the encourage- ınt of religion: they like the law of Christ well ough, if their obedience to it will cost them noing, but if it prove chargeable, they desire to be cused. This was the case of that rich man, Matt. x. 21, 22. and of Ananias and Sapphira, Acts v. e thus lose what we save, and this withholding at which is meet tends to a spiritual poverty, which mes upon the soul like an armed man. This is the orst husbandry that can be; it is like grudging ed to the ground.

3. Many lose their souls in the using, or rather e abusing, of what they have in this world. The inning of the world is oftentimes, when it is won abundance, the losing of the soul. When it is ıt, and men have what they would have in it, it oves a sad occasion of their ruin: the *prosperity of ols* destroys them, Prov. i. 32. Many a man had ɔen happy in the other world if he had not prosɔred in this. The possession of much in the world, is often the losing of the soul; not in and of itself, for outward prosperity is a good gift of God, and is so to be accounted by us. It is the fruit of his blessing, Deut. xxviii. 2, &c. Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Matt. vi. 33. The good things of this world, if wisely managed and improved, may be furtherances to us in our way to heaven. If kept in its due place, worldly prosperity may be an opportunity of being useful to others, and of honouring God. All this, and heaven too—then we serve a good master. Those that are rich in the world, may be the more rich in good works; but then it is not the world that is *gained*, it is only *used*. That is not the point to be *gained*, the prize run for; it is not the ultimate end, but the subordinate means. Worldly prosperity is injurious through the badness of men's hearts. Gaining the world is not in itself a sin, but it is the occasion of sin. Thus the gaining of the world is the losing of the soul, it is such a snare to the soul as does greatly hazard it. The danger is of *abusing* the world, 1 Cor. vii. 31. The world is abused, when it is used for the purposes for which it was never intended. The world, when we have it, is very apt,

(1.) To *estrange* the soul from God; and so it is lost. If it do not, as it should, endear him to us, it will but make us the more forgetful of him. When men have gained much of the world, they are apt to think they have no need of God, as they had when they were poor, and lived immediately upon Providence: they have something else to support them, and they rest upon this too much. God is often lost in a crowd of worldly enjoyments, and commonly those that are familiar with the world are but strangers to God. See what danger there is of this, Deut. vi. 11, 12. and an instance of it, Deut. xxxii. 16, 18. Job xxi. 14. If an ungodly man prosper in the world, it does but make him the more profane and atheistical, Ps. lxxiii. 11, 12. This estrangement from God is gradual and insensible. Multiplicity of business is thought a good excuse from prayer and reading the word, and by degrees the intercourse with him is quite suspended. They that sought God when he slew them, slighted him when the danger was over. That worldly business, or worldly comfort, that steals the heart away from God, is an enemy to it.

(2.) It is apt to *elevate* the soul, and to fill it with pride and so it is lost. The pride of the soul is the ruin of the soul, for it is the preface to destruction. It is that which God resists, and which he will for ever abhor. They that are lifted up with pride, fall into the condemnation of the devil, 1 Tim. iii. 6. The heart is lifted up to destruction, 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. Now this is the effect of gaining the world. There are indeed those who are poor and proud, but generally the rich in this world have need to be charged in the first place, not to be high-minded; so hard is it to keep the mind low when the estate rises. They that

are at ease are *the proud*, Ps. cxxiii. 4. This pride makes people contentious with their brethren, Prov. xiii. 10. When Abram and Lot grew rich they could not agree, Gen. xiii. 2, 7. It makes them oppressive and scornful to their inferiors, Job xii. 5. deaf to the reproofs of the word, Jer. xxii. 21. When Alexander had (he thought) conquered the world, he was ruined by pride; he would be deemed a god, and never prospered after.

(3.) It is apt to *rack* the soul asunder with worldly cares; and so it is lost. It thus becomes unfit for the service of God. The more men have of the world, the more trouble they have with it; which, if suffered to take possession of the soul, hurries it into greater disquietude, and exhausts its life and vigour; pierces it through with many sorrows, 1 Tim. vi. 10. The cares of this life choke the word of God, as thorns do the good seed, Matt. xiii. 22. as a ship may be lost for want of ballast, so it may by being overloaden. Having too much to do in the world, overwhelms many souls. That which chokes the word chokes the soul. When these cares fill us sleeping and waking, there is danger lest they follow us living and dying; and it is to be feared that is a lost soul whose dying care is only or mainly for the world.

(4.) It is apt to *rock* the soul asleep in carnal security; and so it is lost. Those that have gained the world, are ready upon that to build their hopes for heaven, and to think it must needs be well with them in the other world, because it is so well with them in this, Hos. xii. 7, 8. Prospering worldlings are ready to bless themselves in their successes, Ps. x. 3. and to say, To-morrow must needs be as this day, Isa. lvi. 12. That rich fool that had gotten his barns full, began to set his heart at rest; he had what he would, and said, *Soul, take thine ease*, Luke xii. 19. They that prosper are apt to put far from them the evil day, and so it comes upon them as a snare. Some good people have been almost overcome with this temptation, and it has been to the damage of their souls, Job xxix. 18. Ps. xxx. 6.

(5.) It is apt to make the soul a *drudge* to the body; and so it is lost. When men have gained the world, the soul and all its faculties must presently be engaged to *make provision* for the flesh, Rom. xiii. 14. It is hard to put a knife to the throat, and to check the sensitive appetite, when we have that which tends to the gratifying of it. Here is occasion for self-denial, not temperance through necessity, but of choice. When Solomon had gained the world, he withheld nothing from himself that his eyes desired, Eccl. ii. 9, 10. but if God had not given him repentance, it had been his ruin. The indulging of ourselves in sensual pleasures, is destructive to all the powers of the soul. It is the perverting of the order of nature, when the sensitive appetite must have the command of the rational powers.

(6.) It is apt to make the world a *darling* to the soul; and so it is lost. When the world smiles, we are very apt to be taken in its charms, till we be betrayed to our spiritual enemies. The winning gamester loves the play, and is the more eager upon it. He that gains the world, is in danger of loving it more than God; and then how unwilling to part with it. Now the world seems to have purchased the uppermost room in the soul, and to have merited the best respects; and if once men prefer this world before the other, the soul is undone.

II. *Use* 1. If the gaining of the world be so often the losing of the soul, then *wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction*, and it is a marvel that there be so many that *go in thereat*, Matt. vii. 13. Every body is for gaining the world, and few consider that they court their own temptation. It is no wonder the devil prevails against so many, when he has such hold of them by the world. It is a fawning, flattering enemy, that kisses, betrays, and kills. What need then have we to be jealous over ourselves. If our danger be so great, let us therefore fear, Heb. iv. 1. The way to hell is down-hill, an easy descent, strewed with the world's roses to deceive unwary souls.

2. Then we have little reason to envy the prosperity of evil doers. If bold and daring sinners gain the world by their impieties, alas, they do but treasure up unto themselves wrath. They grasp at a shadow, and let go the substance—therefore fret not thyself because of such, Ps. xxxvii. 1, &c. They are but fed as a lamb in a large place to fatten them for the slaughter, Hos. iv. 16. If the wine be red, and give its colour, yet never grudge it them, nor wish for a draught of it; there is death in the cup, there is poison in it. It is like to cost them dear; but what will be the end of these things? Be not desirous of the world's dainties. Dread them, and deprecate them, as Ps. cxli. 4. See a remedy against this envy, Prov. xxiii. 17. Go into the sanctuary, and see the precious soul sinking while the perishing estate is rising, and that will silence all your envy, Ps. lxxiii. 2—18.

3. Then see the reason why God often denies the abundance of this world to good people, and gives them but a little of it; it is because it would be a snare to them. He intends the saving of the soul, and therefore often keeps them low. He crosses them in their worldly pursuits, strips them of their worldly possessions, puts wormwood into their earthly joys, and thus weans them from earth. He does not intend this world for their portion, and a small matter will suffice for their passage. As God often gives, and sends leanness into the soul, Ps. cvi. 15. so he often denies the fatness of the earth, and yet with the dews of heaven makes the soul like a watered garden. Many good people are kept humble, and serious, and close to God, by their crosses

disappointments in the world, these being sanc-
d to them, Ps. cxix. 67, 71.

Then pity and help those that are launching into the world, and want a living principle of e in their hearts to secure them from the danger . Those that are entering into the world are ring into temptation, and have need to be well ed. They hope to gain the world, but are not rehensive of the danger of losing their souls:—see t ought to be the care of parents in disposing of r children. Be more solicitous to make them d, than to make them great. You must be ghtful for something more than teaching them ive in this world, which they may gain and yet eternally undone.

. Then let us not seek great things to our-es in this world. What a folly is it for us to et to spread so large a sail, when we are but osed thereby so much the more to the storm! A le will serve to bear our charges to heaven, and y should we wish for more, John vi. 27. Prov. iii. 5. Be not ambitious of honour, nor covetous wealth. Let us value our souls aright, and esteem er things as they stand in relation to the soul. dliness with contentment is all the wealth in the rld. Subscribe to Agur's prayer, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. l to Jacob's vow, Gen. xxviii. 20. It is not the geness, but the fitness, of a garment that makes it y. God knows what we can bear, what is fit for

. Then in all our gainings of the world, let it be greatest care and endeavour to gain a victory r it. If God succeed honest diligence in worldly siness, and bring into your hands plentifully, take ed lest it be to the losing of the soul, 1 John v. 4. you would not have the gaining of the world the ing of the soul,

Let your souls be loose to the gain of this world. nage all your worldly concerns with a holy in-ference; and while you do so the world will never you much hurt, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. Value not the in of the world as the best gain. Think what se things are, what is the best use that can be de of them, to whom they must be left, and how le they will serve a man in a dying hour.

Let your souls be carried out towards the gain of other world. Our care about this world will not inordinate, if it be kept subordinate to the things ich belong to our everlasting peace. Gain spiri-ally by your gains in temporal things. Gain also your losses; you may do so if you be wise. That true gain which is gain when we come to die; and at nothing is but Christ.

## SERMON VI.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

DOCTRINE 6. That the gain of all the world will not profit him that loseth his soul. He that hazards his soul to gain the world, makes a losing bargain; this is the full scope of the verse, *What is a man profited?* It is taken for granted that interest rules the world of mankind. We see every day what pains men take, what hazards they run, and what hardships they undergo, for profit. They that buy and sell hope to *get gain*, James iv. 13. This is aimed at in every bargain—that profit may be attained. But the misery of it is, that men mistake their true interest, and see things by a false light, and go upon a wrong foundation. They think they are profited by that which is really prejudicial, and fancy that they gain when it is only *loss*. Now the design of the Scriptures is to rectify this mistake; and allowing us to consult our own interest, they make it manifest, that when we prefer the things of the world before the concerns of our souls, we are really enemies to our own *profit*. The account is here balanced, profit and loss compared. See Paul's balancing a believer's account, the produce of which was great gain, Phil. iii. 7, 8.—he wins Christ and loses all he had in the world, and reckons himself an unspeakable gainer, as Matt. xiii. 45, 46. Christ here balances the worldling's account, and the result of that is great loss.

1. The gain supposed, is that of the *whole world*. That is more than ever any body did gain, though some have grasped at it. Gain the *whole world*, *i. e.* gain that which gratifies the world in their hearts, 1 John ii. 16. Those gain the whole world, or think they do so, that have more than heart could wish, Ps. lxxiii. 7. that spend their days in mirth and wealth. Such have the richest returns of this world's trading, they possess a full stream of outward prosperity, without any eclipse.

2. The loss supposed is that of *the soul*—the better, the immortal, part of us. The soul lost by grasping at the world, gaining the point of worldly advantages, and at the same time making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, 1 Tim. i. 19. The soul losing the favour of God, and so losing itself in this world, as to any real consolation, and in the other world experiencing destruction.

3. The balance of the account is, *What is a man profited?* The proposing of it by way of question implies a strong negation; he is in nothing *profited*. It is to be taken as a challenge to the children of this world, like that, Rom. vi. 21. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?

That is a poor bargain which nobody gets by;—such is the bargain of the covetous that lose their souls to *get*, the apostates that lose their souls to *keep*, and the epicures that lose their souls to *enjoy*, the good things of this world. It is explained in the next words, *What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Some think it is borrowed from Job ii. 4. alluding to that obvious remark, that a man will give any thing to save his life; for what good will any thing we have in the world do us if our lives be gone? So it is with the soul, and its life in the future state. This doctrine I shall endeavour to prove and apply.

I. To prove it—That he that loses his soul to gain the world, makes but a poor bargain—he is so far from being a saver, that he is a loser. Now this I shall endeavour to show,

1. By comparing what is gained and what is lost together;—this is necessary in order to the balancing of an account.

(1.) He that gains the world and its happiness, and loses his soul and its happiness, gains *that which is not*, and *loses that which is*; he gains a shadow, and loses a reality. The things of the world are things that *are not*, Prov. xxiii. 5. are not what they pretend to be, and what we consider them to be. They are lying *vanities*, John ii. 8. It is but the *fashion of this world*, the scheme, 1 Cor. vii. 31. it *passeth away*. Spiritual and eternal things are the only real and substantial things. We call the things of this world *substance*, but they are *dissolving substance*, Job xxx. 22. The existence of them as good, is more in our fancy that in the things themselves, Prov. xviii. 11. But the happiness of the soul is a real thing, it is *substance*, Prov. viii. 21. that *which is*; it is enduring substance, Heb. x. 34. If a man part with that which is a substantial happiness for that which is but pretended, what is he profited? Some think it was only a picture of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them, that the devil showed to Christ, Matt. iv. 8. and it is little better than such which multitudes grasp at, to their own ruin.

(2.) He gains that *which is another's*, and loses that *which is his own*. I refer to Luke xvi. 12. He that gains the whole world, can himself enjoy but a small share of it; it is taken from others, it is possessed for others, it is enjoyed with others, and it is left to others. What joy we have in the world, strangers intermeddle with it, and participate of it. He that increases his estate, increases his charge, Eccl. v. 11. If Job's substance was great, his household was in proportion. But the happiness of thy soul is thy own; the joys of that a stranger doth not intermeddle with. Then and then only we do well for ourselves, when we do well for our souls, though it be commonly taken otherwise, Ps. xlix. 18.

(3.) He gains that in which his *happiness doth not consist*, and loseth *that in which it doth*, gains that which, when he has it, will not make a portion t him, and loseth that which, if he had it, would s Luke xii. 15. a man's *life consisteth not* in the things. He may be happy that has but a little of t world. Even the heathen could see this, and spe much of the comfort of those that were content poor. Jacob desired but food and raiment, that w the inventory of his wishes, Gen. xxviii. 20. and *chap.* xxxiii. 11. he says to Esau, *I have all*, my fa ther: see Ps. xxxvii. 16. Prov. xv. 16. But the ha piness of the man doth consist in the welfare a salvation of the soul. Happy is the people wh God is the Lord. The saving of the soul in the d of the Lord Jesus is great gain, though by the d struction of the flesh, 1 Cor. v. 5.

(4.) He gains that which is but *for a time*, a loseth that *which is for ever*. The world passeth aw the things of it perish in the using, witness Ja however, we shall be taken from them, Luke xii. 2 death will strip us. It is certain we can carry t thing out of the world, 1 Tim. vi. 7. our relation all earthly things terminates with life. Death i final farewell to honours, pleasures, and wealth. B the soul must be for ever either in happiness misery. The good things of the soul are everlastin they are durable riches, Prov. viii. 18. You wo reckon him a fool, that would part with the inhe ance of a great estate, for the term of a few years a small tenement. Such, and much greater, is t folly of those that quit an eternal happiness for t momentary enjoyment of the pleasures of sin. Th which is the most durable is the most desirable. M is a creature made for eternity.

2. By considering the consequences of this ba gain. Suppose a man, for the gaining of this world goods, to abandon all thoughts and cares of his so and to expose and hazard it to the highest degre suppose him to succeed in his attempts of gaini the world, and let us see,

(1.) What is his seeming profit. Look upon wh appears the fair side of his bargain, and make t best of it. Produce your cause, ye worldlings, brin forth your strong reasons—let us hear what you a profited. He that gains the world, and abandons h soul,

[1.] He has the *pleasures* of sense; he is filled wi them. He that lays aside all thoughts of his so and has enough of the world—that is neither und the check of conscience, nor the check of poverty- may take a great liberty in indulging the sensu appetite; he may spend his days in mirth; he ma be profited, as Solomon was when he withheld n his heart from any joy, Eccl. ii. 10. What is a ma profited? why, he may eat the fat, and drink the swee and fare deliciously every day, as Luke xvi. 19. B that will abandon his soul, perplexes not himse with self-denying duties;—a fine life, if this wor were to last always, and if we had bodies only, an

no souls. See the utmost profit that the worldling promised himself, Luke xii. 19. *eat, drink, and be merry.* And is not this poor profit? Yet this is the utmost.—Alas, there is pain in this pleasure; the heart sad, Eccl. vii. 6. This profit is but like the apples of Sodom, or as painted sepulchres.

[2.] He has the *praise* of the world. He that gains the world, shall have the world's good word; he has the honour to be caressed by those that walk after the course of this world, Ps. xlix. 13, 18. They that gain the world, and care not for their souls, may have a name like the names of the great men, and make a fair show in the flesh. There are those whose blessings attend the covetous, Ps. x. 3. Thus he that gains the world is profited. Poor profit! but it gratifies a base disposition, as long as it lasts. It is no profit to be applauded of men and condemned of the Lord.

(2.) What is the want of real profit for all this. We may say, *What is he profited?*—it is *unrighteous mammon* which he possesses, Luke xvi. 11. the deceivableness of unrighteousness, deceitful riches. He that *gains the world*, and *abandons his soul*, is,

[1.] A loser in this world. Even here, where he enjoys his gain, and makes his best of it, what is he now profited? Even when he has the most of it,

He is not profited, for he hath nothing to recommend him to the favour of God. His gains of the world will not do it. God loves no man the better for being rich; he beholds the proud afar off. He that abandons his soul, chooses those things in which God delights not. Those that are for *any good* seek not God's favour, Ps. iv. 6. Wanting that favour he has no security nor sweetness of his possessions: see Job xx. 23. A dinner of herbs, with the love of God, is better than a stalled ox, and his hatred therewith.

The worldly man is not profited, for he is often in straits in the fulness of his sufficiency, Job xx. 22. He that gains the world, yet such is its insufficiency to make us happy, that oftentimes some one defect, some one *but*, spoils the sweetness of all his possessions. While Ahab wanted Naboth's vineyard, his kingdom did dot profit him, because he had not a contented mind, 1 Kings xxi. 4. While Haman wanted Mordecai's cap and knee, his preferments did not profit him, because he had not a meek and humble spirit, Esth. v. 11—13.

Men of this description are not profited, for they have no solid comfort in their souls, especially when they are in affliction. You think those live joyfully that have the world at will, but you know not what stripes they have from their own consciences, and what a terror they are to themselves many times; they have the bitter with the sweet in the day, and they have no relief of visitation, Isa. x. 3. Many gain the world, and yet are themselves like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. They have nothing upon which they can repose their souls with any assurance: see Job xx. 12—14. If what they have were gotten by injustice, what comfort have they in it, when conscience is once awake? Thus they who are so eager upon the world, and at the same time careless about their souls, are losers by it even in this world; for the truth of it is, it is godliness with contentment that is the great gain, 1 Tim. vi. 6.—that is all the wealth in the world. He that gains the world, and parts with his soul, is,

[2.] Much more a loser in the other world. Brethren, there is such a world, future indeed, and out of sight, but not the less real. Thoughts of the world to come should make us all serious. Then the gains of the hypocrite are gone, when God *takes away his soul*, Job xxvii. 8. compare the verse after the text; then he will appear a loser when the *Son of man shall come.* He that gained the world will be never the better for it in the other world, for

He shall not have what he gained of the world. What is a man profited by it, when he shall leave it behind him? Money has no currency in the other world. It was only an appurtenance to the body, and therefore, when that was dissolved, all its appurtenances went with it, Job xx. 20. Riches are not for ever; he may have, but he cannot hold. Whose shall these things be? None of thine, to be sure, Luke xii. 20. The great day will burn up all those things which now men set their hearts so much upon, 2 Pet. iii. 10.

It shall not profit a man that he has had the world. If the popish doctrine of purgatory be true, a man may be profited that has gained the world, though he do lose his soul, for he may purchase a recovery; but we have not so learned Christ, who said, What *is a man profited*, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? More is implied than is expressed; not only he is not profited, but he is greatly hurt by it. You shall see it so in three cases. He that loses and abandons his soul, whatever he has gained of this world, whether profit, pleasure, or preferment,

*First*, He is not profited but prejudiced by it in the hour of death. He is not profited, Prov. x. 2; xi. 4. When a wealthy, worldly man comes to die, what advantage is it to him then to have been rich and great. Death will not be bribed to adjourn the execution of his commission for one moment, Ps. xlix. 6—9. The gain of the world will not mitigate the extremity of dying pangs. If there be bands in the death, the wealth of the world will be no relief. Much less will it remove the sting of death, or quiet the conscience; nay, the worldling is prejudiced by it, for it is so much the harder to part. The more a man has gained of the world, the more terror it is to him to think of parting with it. These are the things that make us loth to die. What is a man profited then by his *great possessions?* but that he *goes away* the more *sorrowful.* That which was always vanity, is then vexation; he parts with the

world as Micah did with his gods—What have I more?

*Secondly*, He is not profited, but prejudiced, by worldly gain, in the day of judgment. He that has gained the whole world, but abandoned all thoughts of his soul, what is he profited by it when he must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ? All his gains will do him no good, for the Judge is too just to be bribed. Nay, it will make against him; for the more men had of this world, the more they will have to account for in that day of reckoning. The things of the world are talents to be traded with, and we must give account of our stewardship, Luke xvi. 2. What we had under our hand in the world must come into the account then; both how we got it, and what we did with it. It is good for us to be often calling ourselves to an account of these two things now. All that carnal mirth and sensual pleasure, which worldlings are so taken up with, will make against them then, Eccl. xi. 9. For *all these things*, God will bring them into judgment.—Hence we find the *rich men* seeking shelter under the rocks, Rev. vi. 15—17.

*Thirdly*, He is not profited, but prejudiced, by it, in his eternal punishment;—so the punishment of sin in hell is called, Matt. xxv. 46. What is a man profited by all the wealth of this world, when he comes into that lake which burns eternally with fire and brimstone? The gain of the world will not recover a lost soul, it will not open the gate when once shut, and it will not remove that great gulf, when once fixed;—the gates of the shadow of death cannot be unlocked by a golden key, nor will it give any relief or abatement to the misery. He that had fared sumptuously every day, and drunk wine in bowls, could not there get a drop of water to cool his tongue; nay, he is prejudiced by it. Hell is hell indeed, misery with an emphasis, to those that go thither from the midst of this world's abundance.—Son, remember, Luke xvi. 25. How art thou fallen! Isa. xiv. 12. 16. What *pleasure has he in his house?* Job xxi. 21; xiv. 21, 22. Hell flames will show what a bad bargain they have made for themselves, that to gain the world lost their souls.

II. I shall improve this truth, and very instructive it is, if God give us wisdom and grace to consider it.—Mix faith with this word of Christ, meditate upon it, and digest it. We have reason to take his word in these things, and to rely upon it; and let us from hence learn three good lessons:

1. A holy contempt of this world, especially when it comes in competition with our souls. Our Lord Jesus is here weighing the world and the soul, and on the world, he writes, *Tekel*, Dan. v. 27. See the insufficiency of the world to make you happy if you had never so much of it, and do not overvalue it. Let not that be upon the throne in your hearts, which God has put under your feet. A contempt of the world is a good step towards our victory over it. We must be thankful for what we have in the world, and diligent about what we have to do in the world, but we must not place our happiness in it.

(1.) In *pursuing* the world, we must not overvalue it. It rectifies and sanctifies our worldly pursuits, when we put a right estimate upon the things of the world.—Seek them not as your end, but as the means; not as precious stones to be laid up in your cabinets, but as stepping-stones, to help you through this land of your pilgrimage. Look upon this world's goods as good in their place, but bad out of it; good servants, but bad masters; good things, but not the best things. Do not pursue the world as your portion, Ps. xvii. 14. neither as your reward, Matt. vi. 2. nor as your consolation, Luke vi. 24. Value them as good things, but not as *your* good things, your chief good. Those overvalue the world, that seek it for itself, and that seek it inordinately, and that seek *much* of it. The same divine penman that says, The hand of the diligent makes rich, says, Labour not to *be rich*, Prov. xxiii. 4. In valuing the world, go according to God's book of rates. Other things are valued according as they are more or less profitable to us. Think whether the world be profitable to our souls or no.

(2.) In *possessing* the world, we must not value *ourselves by it*. Every man has something of a value for himself, and most men measure themselves by the standard of the world—value themselves according to the smiles or frowns of the world. We must not value ourselves as high, because so advanced, nor as safe, because so guarded. When the world flows in plentifully upon you, think, Alas what good will this do me, if my soul should be lost after all? What a base and miserable wretch am I, if in the midst of all, I be a bond-slave to sin and Satan! We must take heed what that is which we bless ourselves in, whether in the deceitful world, Ps. xlix. 18. or in the God of truth, Isa lxv. 16. Reckon yourselves happy in the favour of God, rather than in the smiles of the world. See by what measures we are to value ourselves, Jam. i. 9—11. Nothing conduceth more to the peace and the purity of our own souls than this contempt of the world.

Learn, 2. A holy concern about our souls. You see where your great interest is not bound up; see then where it is; and since you cannot make the world sure, nor a happiness for yourselves in the world, make that sure that will be made sure—the welfare of your souls. You see what an irreparable loss the loss of the soul is. Men and brethren, look well to your souls. A man would, if it were but to please his fancy, run the hazard of losing some small matter, but this that is your care is not a small thing, for it is your life, Deut. xxxii. 47. Be *concerned* about them, that is, be desirous of their welfare, diligent in the use of means for the further-

e of their welfare. *Keep thy soul*, Deut. iv. 9. ıat shall I do for my precious soul? Two things uld be our concern about our souls:

1.) Their *serviceableness* to God in this world. ıt soul is in a manner lost that God has no ho- ır and glory from. Be more solicitous how to ıour God with your spirits, than how to honour ırselves with your estates. True religion is in- d work, the work of the heart, Rom. ii. 29. The l rules the body, and guides all the actions.—O that the tree be made good—see it to be much re for your true advantage to worship God in the rit, than to follow after the things of this world. solicitous to keep yourselves clean from sinful lutions, fixed for gracious exercises, Prov. iv. 23. ırn to honour God with your spirits, and then you l know how to honour him with your substance.

2.) Their *salvation* with God in the other world. concerned what is likely to become of you to rnity. Let your future unchangeable state be ch upon your hearts—the salvation *of the soul*, b. x. 39. 1 Pet. i. 9. Look upon this as the great d most desirable good, and pursue it accordingly: fer this before all other cares. Is there any thing ich more deserves or more needs your care than s? It is your great business in this world, that which you were sent into the world. It is your at interest as to the other world. Is not this the e thing needful? Had we but a powerful belief the reality of invisible things, how would that wn all other concerns, in our prayers, in our cares, d in our endeavours.

3. A holy conduct of ourselves according to these nciples. Let this word of Christ, that has come us so fully, dwell in us richly; let this truth re- le in our hearts, and rule there. Abide by this nciple, that the gain of the world is nothing if the ıl be lost; that our worldly interests, how near ver, are not worthy to be compared, not fit to be med the same day, with the great interests of our ıls.—Be delivered into the mould of this truth. member this truth, and make use of it,

(1.) When you are *tempted* to sin for worldly profit's sake—tempted to tell a lie, or defraud, or oppress, or do any wrong, for mammon, think, What will this gain be at last? That gain is dear bought that is purchased by sin;—the *gain* will soon be gone, Prov. xiii. 11. Jer. xvii. 11. but the *guilt* will remain, and we must repent of it, or do worse. Those who lose more than they get, will soon become bankrupt. Impress this upon your hearts in an hour of such temptation.

(2.) When you are *tried* by persecution for righteousness' sake—when the world is not to be gotten, but saved, (and there is a fairer pretence for that,) when we must either deny Christ or lose our worldly possessions, then remember this text;—see the verse before the text. If I should lose my soul to save my preferment, I should make but an ill bargain;—this consideration carried the martyrs through the fiery trial. Life is sweet, but eternal life is more sweet, said Bishop Hooper in the prospect of martyrdom: see Acts xx. 24. 2 Cor. iv. 16, 18.

(3.) In the great *turns* of your lives. Let this Scripture prevent all worldly, sensual choices, which prove so fatal to many. Do not, to get or save in the world, go out of the way of opportunities for your souls: see Ps. cxix. 72. Lot chose for the fat land, but what did it profit him, when in the enjoyment of his choice he had like to have lost his own soul? Postpone the world to the soul. When these interests part, remember this text.

(4.) In the constant *tenor* of your conversation. Go by this principle, That the saving of the soul is of much greater consequence to you than the gaining of the world, and let your cares be engaged accordingly—much more for your eternal happiness, than for your temporal convenience. Let this govern your aims and intentions, your actions and endeavours, your thoughts about your children, and all other things. Let this moderate worldly pursuits, and invigorate spiritual pursuits. Let Christ be your gain living and dying, Phil. i. 21. and then all is well, and well for ever.

[*These sermons were preached in* 1696.]

# SERMONS AND CHARGES.

[*It does not appear upon what occasion the following Sermon was delivered, though probably it was connected with some ordination service.*]

NUMBERS xv. 39.

*And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them.*

OLD-TESTAMENT institutions are New-Testament instructions, though, thanks be to God, not New-Testament impositions. Those carnal ordinances are capable of a spiritual improvement; particularly this appointment of the fringes which they were ordered to make on the borders of their garments. Observe,

1. The sign appointed, a *fringe* upon the borders of their garments, and a riband of blue upon it. This was a law agreeable enough to their peculiarity; they were not to be reckoned among the nations; they were to be distinguished in garb as well as diet. Some think Christ wore these fringes, Matt. ix. 20; xiv. 36. In this as in other things he was made under the law. These fringes the Pharisees enlarged, Matt. xxiii. 5. that they might seem more holy than their neighbours.—See another law, Deut. xxii. 12.

2. The thing signified by it. It was to be a memorandum to them that they were a peculiar people, and that God had given them laws by which to be governed. We need all possible helps to stir up our obedience, 2 Pet. iii. 1. The phylacteries were distinct from the fringes. They must *look upon the fringe*. Many look upon their ornaments, and are proud: this is a sin to be carefully watched against. This was to be looked upon as a memorial. The Lord's supper is an ordinance of commemoration, that we may look upon it and *remember*—in sight, in mind.

DOCT. That we ought always to remember the commandments of the Lord our God, that we may do them. God's will concerning our duty ought to be had in remembrance by us.

1. That which is to be remembered is the commandments of the Lord. God is our ruler, his will revealed a law to us, and he has laid his commands upon us, both negative and affirmative precepts; those we must remember: see Mal. iv. 4.

(1.) We must not only remember divine histories to talk of, but divine commands; not only Scripture stories, but Scripture statutes, see Heb. xii. 17. *Ye know* the story, and yet, v. 5. *ye have forgotten the exhortation.*

(2.) Not only divine truths to dispute of, but divine commands; not only doctrines, to fill our heads with notions, but plain precepts, to direct our hearts and lives. These we are to hold fast in faith and love, 2 Tim. i. 13.

(3.) Not only divine promises, to take comfort from, but divine commands. Many love to hear of comfort that do not care to hear of duty. They must have smooth things prophesied to them.

2. Our duty concerning the commandments is, to *remember* them, keep them always in view, and bring them on every occasion to mind.

(1.) It is implied that God has *made known* his commandments to us; we cannot plead ignorance, if we *forget* it is our own fault. They are revealed, they are revealed to us, Mic. vi. 8. revealed by natural conscience, and much more clearly by the written word. He has not left himself without witness.

(2.) That though we have known the commandments of God, yet we are apt to forget them, and lose their power, Heb. ii. 1. If God's truths be forgotten, and the duties he has commanded be out of sight, their practical influence and solid consolation cannot be enjoyed. The forgetful mind will be accompanied by the unsanctified heart, and by the unholy walk.

3.) That therefore we must endeavour always to
ıember them, that is,
)ur memories must retain the remembrance of
d's commandments, as—what the will of God is in
:h and such cases, what is the evil that God has
bidden, and the good that he has commanded. We
ıst make them familiar to us, Prov. iii. 3; vii. 3, 4.
:y must be much the objects of our meditation.
)ur consciences must be ready to apply the com-
.nds of God to particular cases, we must have
ıse precepts at hand that are suited to our pre-
ıt duty, opportunity, and temptation.
When tempted to sin, we must remember the com-
ınd that forbids that particular sin, Jer. xliv. 4.
is written so and so.
When duty is to be done, according as the work
the day is, we must remember the command that
quires that duty; whether it be daily prayer, sab-
th sanctification, or any other duty.
When an opportunity of good offers itself, then
member the general command of improving all
portunities.
We are to remember *all* God's commandments,
: must not select one and reject another.
3. The intention of this remembrance is in order
obedience to God's will, Josh. i. 8. James i. 25.
(1.) That the frame of our hearts may be accord-
g to the commandments, a copy and counterpart
the law in our hearts.
(2.) That the course of our lives may be according
them, that we may steer our course by this com-
ass, and that we may walk by this rule.
*Use.* Thus remember all the commandments of
ıe Lord, the commandments of the law and gospel.
onsider,
1. You were taught them betimes. We are to re-
ıember what we learned when we were children.—
ou were taught these with your first lessons; let
ot time wear out what you learned when you were
hildren; see Prov. i. 8; iv. 1. You were taught
ıem by those that loved you, 2 Tim. iii. 14. and let
ıis have weight with you.
2. They are great things and worth remembering,
ıey are called the *great things* of the law. They
re the things of God, things that concern the soul
nd eternity. The servant is concerned to remember
is master's orders, and every subject, to remember
he laws of the realm to which he belongs.
3. They are not grievous, nor such as will bur-
hen our memories, 1 John v. 3. God has not made
ıs slaves—all his will is comprised in one word,
*Love.*
4. We have many remembrancers—ministers, sa-
raments, dispensations of providence, and con-
cience, are designed to fix these things in our
ninds, and make them ready to us. We receive
God's grace in vain, if we forget them.
5. It will be much to our advantage to remember
these commands, God will remember all those who
remember him, and treasure up his commands.

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## CHARGE I.

[*The following memorandum connected with the ensuing Charge, appears in Mr. Henry's MS. Diary.*

Aug. 6th, 1706. An ordination fast at Knutsford, ordained Mr. Leolin Edwards, of Tinsel, Mr. Thomas Perrot, of Newmarket, and Mr. Silas Sidebottom, of Whelock.—We had a very comfortable day. I hope many were edified. Mr. Angier prayed, Mr. Lawrence preached, 2 Tim. ii. 2. *The same commit thou to faithful men.* I took the confession, and gave the exhortation.—We had much comfort together—were about eighteen ministers—at night went to Winslow; many of my friends with me.]

HAVING now, my brethren, by prayer, solemnly recommended you to God, and to the word of his grace, we are in the close, to speak from God to you, and to give you a charge, as Moses gave to Joshua in the people's sight.

1. We heartily bid you welcome into our number, and bless God there are some coming in, for a great many are gone off of late. We are threatened with the making of a full end, but this is a token for good, and gives us ground to hope that God will not make a full end with us, and will not depart from us—For if he had been pleased to kill us, he would not have showed us such things as these. We rejoice that God has a seed to serve him, that the church has guides, and that we have fellow-labourers; for we need help, our hands are this day weak, and if you be faithful you will strengthen them.

2. We bid you be of good courage. Take your Master's word for it, and our experience to confirm it, that the work you are engaged in is good work. There is a present reward in it, and an eternal reward at the end, 1 Pet. v. 4. We must tell you, that you must count upon discouragements; but be faithful, and then be of good courage. If your hearts be not right with God, you have reason to be discouraged, nothing will be such a damp to you as hypocrisy, but if you be sincere, you must not be discouraged.

(1.) Be not discouraged by your own weakness and infirmities; let them humble you, but not dishearten you, for God's grace is sufficient for you. Where you are weak in yourselves, if sensible of your weakness, and relying on Christ, you shall find yourselves strong. Encourage yourselves to use means for your improvement. God's blessing can do wonders by weak endeavours.

(2.) Be not cast down by the reproaches and in-

juries you may meet with. You set out with the wind in your faces, and perhaps may hear of hard things said of you; but let none of these move you, Acts xx. 24. You are not to stand or fall by men's judgment. Approve yourselves to God, and you may be easy; the smile of our Father will balance the anger of all our foes, and his *well done*, all their unkind censures.

(3.) Be not discouraged by the little success of your ministry; it is the case of many. Some that we have taken pains with, and of whom we said, These shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, are the source of grief to us. But our recompence will be according to our faithfulness, not according to our success;—Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the sight of the Lord. But recollect, it is possible that the want of success may arise from our neglect of duty, Jer. xxiii. 22.

3. We bid you God speed, and it seems in the primitive times that was a great matter, 2 John 10, 11. You have our hearty good wishes. God prosper his work in your hands! We hope we have not sent you to gather the grass on the house-top, which men think not worth giving their blessing with, Ps. cxxix. 6—8. but that you will gather in a harvest of souls. Though you enter into the labour of others, yet he that reapeth receiveth wages, John iv. 36—38. We trust you will thus be rewarded, and therefore we bid you God speed.

4. We direct you to mind your work, and be true to the trusts reposed in you. You are sworn to no other canonical obedience, but to the Scriptures; so that I need only point out the rules to you.

(1.) *That good thing which is committed to you, keep*, 2 Tim. i. 14. the form of sound words, *v.* 13. the gospel truths, the knowledge of which you have signified, and in which you professed your belief, 1 Tim. vi. 12, 20. This is the true grace of God, wherein you stand. Stand to it then, and never let it go. We see you have bought the truth. Sell it not at any rate; you can never lose by the purchase, nor get by the sale. You are intrusted with the charge of the sanctuary, Numb. iii. 25. to preside in solemn assemblies, and to administer holy ordinances. Keep the charge, though you be called as they were, to war a warfare in it.

(2.) *Give attendance to reading*, 1 Tim. iv. 13. You must be laying in, or you cannot lay out. Be still furnishing yourselves with useful knowledge. Read the Scriptures, and other books to help you to understand the Scriptures. It is expected that you excel in knowledge, and a shame if others, whose study and business is about the world, should excel you. Every evening ask, What have I learned today? Get good books, borrow them, collect out of them; in all labour there is profit, and I hope there will be pleasure. Be in study as in your element. If it be a weariness to the flesh, the delight of the spirit will make amends.

(3.) *Take heed to yourselves, and to your doctrine*, 1 Tim. iv. 16.—*to yourselves*, that you may save yourselves. Look well to the state of your own souls, that you may experience in them what you preach to others, may digest that yourselves, with which you would affect others. Keep a strict watch over your own hearts. *To your doctrine*—that it be sound, and according to the Scriptures, suited to the capacities and necessities of your hearers. Offer not that which cost you nothing. Take pains in all you do, that you may find out acceptable words. Let all your performances smell of the lamp; it will engage the attention of your people; they will be careless if you are so. *Take heed to your doctrine*, that is, oppose neither God's grace nor man's duty, but take both together.

4. *Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves*, Matt. x. 16.—these two must go together. *Prudence*, not fleshly wisdom, but that which is by the grace of God. It will be your prudence to meddle as little as may be in secular affairs, not to entangle yourselves in the affairs of this life—Who made me a judge or divider? Also to take heed what you say of other people. There is a time when the prudent shall keep silence. With this prudence unite *innocency*. A dove-like spirit without gall will well become you. If others be any way injurious to you, do not meditate revenge, for that is not *dove-like*. Your business is to do good to all, therefore your care must be to do hurt to none.

5. *Give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed*, 2 Cor. vi. 3. Preserve the reputation of your ministry. Get and keep a good name, Phil. iv. 8. avoid the very appearance of evil. The most circumspect cannot escape censure, but you should endeavour to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Let it never be said of you, that you are proud and haughty, that you are vain and trifling, that you are covetous or worldly. Deny yourselves in many things which otherwise are lawful, that you may save the credit of your ministry; it is an honour to you, be not you a reproach to it. If that be blamed, we are blamed who have set you apart to it. You have many eyes upon you, and some that watch for your halting, therefore walk accurately.

6. *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof*, 1 Pet. v. 2. Acts xx. 28. You are charged with souls, precious souls, the purchase of Christ's blood. Every Christian that has but one soul to look after, finds enough to do; if all had but one, it would find them work enough; but you have many, *feed* them, and do not poison them. Do not make the offering of the Lord to be abhorred. feed them and do not starve them. Have a concern for souls, for *theirs* in particular;—feed the ignorant with knowledge, the careless with admonition, the

ndering with direction, and the mourning with mfort. As the master of a family has a constant re of his family, so you of your flocks. They are lunteers, therefore you may be the more encourag- in dealing with them.

7. *Be instant in season, and out of season.* This is arged with great solemnity, 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. Take l occasions for the pulpit, and make it to appear at your work is your delight, and not a drudgery; e all opportunities for instructing and exhorting personal converse. Never reckon it *out of season* do good to poor souls. Seek opportunity; it is season when they are in affliction; then an inter- eter will be one of a thousand; fail not to visit e sick. *Be instant* also in visiting those that are health. Wherever you come, leave a good word ehind you.

8. *Show yourselves patterns of good works*, Tit. ii. Christ began to do and teach, Acts i. 1. and so ust you, else you pull down with one hand what ou build up with the other.—Your voice is Jacob's; t your hands be his too. You would have others be serious and humble; be you so. You must put thers in mind as directed, Tit. iii. 1, 2. set them n example then: see 1 Tim. iv. 12. Though you re young in age, you are elders in office, and there- ore it becomes you to be serious. If any variance appen, be patterns of peace-making, yielding to thers, and bearing with them. You will hardly re- oncile those to Christ, whom you cannot reconcile o yourselves. Win upon all by love and meek- ess.

9. *Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, Tim. ii. 1. See that you have true grace your- elves, and then that you be stronger and stronger. Let all your strength be in the grace of Christ; de- ive aid from him daily. Depend always upon him. Do all in his name and for his glory; without this, he youths will faint and be weary, Ps. lxxi. 16. Never rely upon your own strength. When you study, or preach, go in the strength of Christ; you are not sufficient of yourselves, but he will be suf- ficient for you, and if trying times should come, de- pend upon his grace to enable you to persevere.

10. *Hold fast till Christ comes*—This is all the burthen that is laid upon the presbyters of Thyatira, Rev. ii. 24, 25. There are many that are seeking to wrest your good things from you. That which is committed to you, hold it fast; never let it go. Christ comes to own you and crown you; persevere to the end, that you lose not your crown. You can- not go back; go forward then, go on to the end, then shall he appear to your joy. I hope you are satisfied in what you have done here to-day; do not undo it again, but hold it fast. To conclude, now, in the close of the day,

1. Remember the vows you have this day made, they are upon you; you have sworn, see that you per- form it. Be not irresolute; you are in Christ's bonds, and they are good, let these bonds hold you.

2. Remember the prayers that have been this day made for you, for your encouragement. Paul often tells his friends for what he prayed for them, that they might be encouraged. Many earnest prayers have been put up for you, which you will reap the benefit of, if it be not your own fault. Defeat not our prayers.

3. Remember the charge that has now been given you, the trust committed to you, and set your hearts to it. It is to Timothy that Paul writes, Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

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## CHARGE II.

[*Extract from Mr. Henry's MS. Diary.*

May 13th, 1707. Ordination fast at Knutsford, Mr. Low, Dr. Holland, and Mr. Angier prayed. Mr. Lawrence preached, Ps. xvi. 13. *Show me the path of life.* Mr. Twemlow and Mr. Garsyde were set apart, by imposition of hands. We were minded of our ordination vows. O that the obligations of them may abide always upon me! We were refreshed with the society of our brethren.]

THE charge we have now to give you, now you are sworn on this grand inquest, between our Sovereign Lord, the King of kings, and his church on earth, is not a light thing, for it is your life. Let me tell you,

I. In general, what sort of charge it is.

1. It is a divine charge. We have not the appoint- ment of your work, we only are to tell it you; you have your charge from the same hand that gives you your commission, and that puts you into the ministry, even Christ, whose ministers and stewards you are. He commanded the twelve, Matt. x. 5; xi. 1. and afterward, Acts i. 2. and from him you are to expect the blessing, Luke xxiv. 50. and strength to fulfil your trust.

2. It is a solemn charge, enough to strike an awe upon the lightest mind. See with what solemnity Paul gives Timothy a charge again and again: though he was a man of a serious spirit, Paul saw he needed it, 1 Tim. v. 21; vi. 13, 14. 2 Tim. iv. 1. That the sense of it may remain upon you, receive it with solemnity. God's eye is upon you, and the eye of Christ, and the holy angels see you.

3. It is a charge which requires the whole man for the fulfilling of it, all that is within you. If a man had ten souls, the ministry is work enough for them all; therefore the charge of the sanctuary was committed to men in the prime of their time, be- tween twenty-five and fifty years of age. You have

always something to do, either fishing or mending the nets.

4. It is a charge for life. While God gives you ability and opportunity, you are to continue labour. You are laying your hand to a plough, from which there is no looking back; a charge from which you must not think of being *discharged* till your life shall end. In case of sickness, God will have mercy and not sacrifice; and if restrained by men, you will find the same mercy; but you must not expect a life of idleness, and if you be Christ's servants you will not desire it.

5. It is a charge upon which you will be called to an account in the great day. Ministers must be judged—your office will not exempt you. If you profane the holy things of God, remember Nadab and Abihu, in the day when they were consecrated.

II. In particular we give you charge,

1. Concerning the oracles of God, the Holy Scriptures. They are a sacred deposit; you are intrusted with the custody of them. They may easier be kept now in writing, than when by tradition. You are the stewards that are intrusted with this treasure.

(1.) Let these oracles be your *study*. Converse with them daily. Make the Scriptures familiar to you. Learn the Scriptures by heart. Be ready and mighty in the Scriptures, as Apollos was, Acts xviii. 24.

(2.) Let them be your *standard*, your touchstone. By these try yourselves first,—your own hearts and lives, your spiritual state, and your ministry—whether you answer the Scripture characters. By these try the spirits, 1 John iv. 1. and try doctrines and practices, Isa. viii. 20.

(3.) Let them be your *store-house*. Fetch your prayers and sermons out of the Scriptures: it will make the man of God perfect, 2 Tim. iii. 17. Matt. xiii. 52. And let them be the magazine of your spiritual warfare.

(4.) Let them be your *stay*. Establish yourselves from the Scriptures, and encourage yourselves. This is the word on which you are caused to hope, even the word of truth, 2 Cor. vi. 7. Hope in the word, when other encouragements fails. We give you charge,

2. Concerning the *ordinances of Christ*. These are the mysteries you are stewards of, 1 Cor. iv. 1. see Numb. iii. 6, 10. These are a trust, a dispensation committed to us, 1 Cor. ix. 17. Be very careful then,

(1.) In your *admission* to special ordinances. You are intrusted with the keys, Matt. xvi. 19. be very cautious to avoid the extremes. Let not those that are grossly ignorant, or scandalous, be suffered to profane the holy things of the Lord; yet let not those be rejected, that are weak in the faith, or in small matters differ from you, Rom. xiv. 1.

(2.) In your *administration* of all the ordinances. Seeing you are not obliged to forms, you have the more need to furnish yourselves for every good word and work. Let not that liberty be turned into licentiousness. Improve in your praying gifts. Offer not any thing unbecoming the seriousness of the ordinance. Use Scripture expressions; they are most unexceptionable to all, and the most agreeable to them that are serious: see Eccl. v. 2. Pray for the spirit of prayer, Rom. viii. 26. In preaching, be studious; offer not that which costs you nothing, 1 Tim. iv. 13, &c. Keep to the proportion of faith, Rom. xii. 6. Speak with the words which the Holy Ghost teaches, 1 Cor. ii. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 11. Choose for your subjects the plainest and most needful truths: endeavour to make them plainer, and be serious in the delivery. In administering sacraments prepare somewhat beforehand, and keep up a reverence for those seals of the covenant. We exhort you,

3. Concerning the *case of your own souls*. Take heed *to thyself*, to save thyself in the first place. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

(1.) Make sure your own interest in Christ, and a work of grace in your hearts, that you may speak by experience. Be not as Noah's workmen, that built an ark for others, and perished themselves. Your work will be a task and burthen to you, if you do not relish divine things; and you cannot expect God's blessing.

(2.) Keep up an *intimacy* with your own hearts. Be much in communing with them. Keep your own vineyards; else how can you keep others. Feel what you speak; it will be quite another thing when it comes from the heart. Make that clear to yourselves which you would make clear to others, and be affected with that yourselves with which you would affect others. Look well to your principles and aims. Let your eye be single. Take heed of pride, it will spoil all. There is no greater ornament to a young minister than humility, Ps. lxxi. 16. We address you,

4. Concerning the course of your conversation. If your lives be not of a piece with your preaching, you pull down with one hand what you build up with the other. See to it, that in your conversation.

(1.) You preserve the credit of your ministry. We charge you with this, because the glory and honour of God is concerned in it, which will suffer if you miscarry yourselves: see Rom. ii. 21, 24. Keep at a distance from all evil, from all appearances of it. Many eyes are upon you; let your conversation be grave, sober, and pure. Ministers should be mortified men, 1 Cor. ix. 27. see 1 Tim. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

(2.) That you promote the ends of your ministry. Preach in your lives. Good discourse will be expected from you, and better taken from you than from others. Be examples to believers, 1 Tim. iv. 12.

Let them see that you yourselves believe what you tell them of the evil of sin. They will do as you do sooner than as you say. Make your converse edifying, that every company you come into may be the better for you. We charge you,

5. Concerning the welfare of the church in general. You are the messengers of the churches, as well as the *glory of Christ*, 2 Cor. viii. 23. Be serviceable to the church,

(1.) By your prayers. You are watchmen upon the walls, Isa. lxii. 6, 7. be intercessors for the church. Prophets prayed for the public peace. Stand in the gap, as Moses. Who should if you do not? Acquaint yourselves with the state of the churches, that you may be particular in your requests.

(2.) By your peaceableness. Condemn not those that differ from you. Be not censorious; widen not our differences; and judge charitably of all. Praise that which is good, and make the best of what you dislike. We speak to you,

6. Concerning the welfare of those congregations that are particularly committed to your charge. They must in a special manner be your care. You are their choice, and are not thrust upon them, and therefore you have in some respects a greater advantage in dealing with them, Acts xx. 28. 1 Pet. v. 2.

(1.) In your public ministrations, study their good, what they most need—as the physician studies the case of his patient; avoid personal reflections, and apply those words of God which you think will reach their case, and pray they may reach their consciences.

(2.) In your private applications, when they apply themselves to you especially; and though they do not, seek opportunity to apply yourselves to them.

Be familiar with them, never shy nor haughty. Show yourselves glad of an occasion to talk with them about their souls. Be so well furnished, that you need not fear betraying ignorance. Be so humble, as not to think it a disparagement to converse with the meanest saint, but rather a disparagement to be in company with the haughtiest sinner.

Be faithful to them, tell them with meekness of their faults,—and then you may hope to see the great ends of your ministry attained.

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## CHARGE III.

[*Extract from Mr. Henry's MS. diary.*

October 20, 1707. Went by Wrenbury Wood to Nantwich, to an ordination. The evening spent in examining the candidates at Mr. Lawrence's,—Mr. Richard Lessingham, of Grantham in Lincolnshire, who brought very good testimonials, Mr. William Bryan, of Newcastle, Mr. John King, of Stone, and Mr. John Kenrick, of Wrexham.

21st. An ordination fast. Mr. Lawrence began; Mr. Irham prayed; Dr. Holland preached; I took the confession, and gave the exhortation. We were in all about twenty ministers. The candidates discovered much seriousness, and we hope they are all likely to serve the cause of God. Dr. Holland preached, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. We were much refreshed, and there were none to make us afraid.]

The question God put to Elijah, we desire to put to ourselves—What do we here? and the question Christ put to the people concerning John, we would put to you—What come ye out for to see?

1. We that are ministers, should be able to give a good account what we do here. We are not here to strive or cry, or to have our voice heard in the streets; not to revile the government or the national establishment. We desire to be found of the quiet in the land; not to contend with our brethren, or condemn those from whom we differ. To the same Master they and we must stand or fall. We hope we take not too much upon us; but as ministers we are to give ourselves to the word and prayer. As in other things, so in this, by prayer to recommend to God, and by the word to recommend to you, some that are here, to give up themselves to the service of Christ in the work of the ministry. We pretend not to *commission* them; they have their commission from Christ; nor to *consecrate* them; they have their consecration from the Holy Ghost. We pretend not to give them the Holy Ghost, it is not in our power, but solemnly to set them apart, or rather to recognize their setting of themselves apart, to this great work, and to bless them in the name of the Lord. We hope the ordination of Timothy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, will bear us out before God in what we do, 1 Tim. iv. 14. and there is a promise to two or three that agree to ask any blessing of God, Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

2. You that are the candidates, are concerned to consider what you do here. You are here to dedicate yourselves to Christ. You have made some trial of his work, and you are now to be bound, as those that like it well, and would not go out from it. You have counted the cost, and have resolved to make the ministry your business, and give yourselves to it.

3. The people are to consider what they come hither *to see*. We are to give them a charge *in your sight*, that you may see what obligations your ministers are under to their work, and may esteem them highly, and help them with your prayers; may value the privilege of a standing ministry, and be thankful for the gifts and powers given to men. For your full satisfaction we are to tell you,

(1.) What has been done concerning those that are now to be offered to God. They have been educated in learning; the schools of the prophets have

given proof of their abilities. Every scholar is not fit to be made a minister. They have been tried, and found apt to teach. They have been tried by the people to whom they are to minister, and found fit for them, and of a good conversation. They are not only blameless, but exemplary. They have showed themselves able not only to preach the truth but defend it.

(2.) What is now to be done. They are to make a confession of their faith. We leave them to do it in their own words, that you may understand their knowledge in the mystery of Christ, Eph. iii. 4. and that ye may be satisfied in their soundness in the faith. They are to make their vows to the Lord, and they shall be their free-will offerings. Remember you are in the presence of God.

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## EXHORTATION.

When Solomon by a long prayer had dedicated the temple, blessed God, and blessed the congregation, he concluded with an exhortation, 1 Kings viii. 61.—so do we.

I. By way of *charge*. There are five things we have to give you in charge, according to what has been done this day.

1. The confessions of faith you have this day made. Hold fast those sound words. The doctrines of Christ are called *traditions*, 2 Thess. ii. 15. because delivered to you to keep. Keep them safe, keep them pure. Contend earnestly for the faith; it is worth contending for. You have bought it; it is a good bargain; sell it not. Keep them in faith and love. We take you to be faithful men, and therefore commit the deposit to you, 2 Tim. ii. 2.

2. The covenants with which you have this day bound your souls. The vows of God are upon you; do not complain of the weight of them as a burthen, but feel the strength of them as a bond. You have opened your mouth to the Lord, and cannot go back. Oft call to mind your ordination vows, those sacred things:—Did I not say, I would be diligent and faithful? I did, and dare not unsay it.

3. The credit of the office to which you have this day been admitted. It is a very high and honourable calling. You are called to be ambassadors for Christ, to be masters of religious assemblies, and stewards in God's house. If you in any thing carry yourselves amiss, you bring disgrace upon your profession. Take heed that the ministry be not blamed. It is not your credit only, but the credit of the gospel, that lies at stake. You have many eyes upon you, and have much for which to answer. Beware lest you should grieve the good, and harden the bad.

4. You have this day been intrusted with the custody of the ordinances,—the word, sacraments, and prayer. Keep them pure and entire. Take heed that none of them be debased, and so suffer damage, through you. Corruptions are apt to creep in; let your eye be to the institution; be faithful as the people's mouth to God, and God's to them. Remember from whom you are speaking, and whom you address. Teach what Christ has commanded, pray according to the direction of the word, attend properly to baptism and the Lord's supper, and carefully maintain discipline.

5. The care of the people to whom you are this day recommended. Feed the lambs and the sheep. We hope you love Christ; if you do, take care of those you have purchased. Remember you are watchmen, you are shepherds,—if you neglect your duty, blood will be required at your hands. Though I think not the union between ministers and people inseparable, yet I think the relation very near. Bear them upon your hearts before the Lord.

II. By way of *caution*. You are in danger. As soon as ever Nadab and Abihu were consecrated they fell into that sin which cost them so dear. Be not high-minded, but jealous over yourselves with godly jealousy.

1. Take heed of affecting novelties in religion, lest you fall into vanities, or worse. Ask for the old way. Keep to the faith once delivered to the saints. Be still building upon the old foundation, in which it is good to be established, Heb. xiii. 9.

2. Take heed of spiritual pride. This is spoken of as the temptation of young ministers, 1 Tim. iii. 6. Think not you have already attained, but forget the things that are behind. Magnify your office, but do not magnify yourselves. It is not outward honour at which we must aim. Let evil report help to lay us low, and let not good report help to lift us up. Boasting is for ever excluded, 1 Cor. iv. 7. Pray much against this sin; pray for grace sufficient.

3. Take heed of the indulgence of the flesh. Paul minds himself of it. Take it not ill that I remind you of it, 1 Cor. ix. 27. Prophets are spiritual men; but the prophet is a fool, and the spiritual man is mad, if he submit to the dominion of carnal lusts. Be sober in the use of creature comforts. That liberty which may be decent in another may be culpable in a minister.

4. Take heed of worldliness. The love of money in a minister, is the root of more evil than in any other person. Regard not present things if the heavenly Canaan be your possession; let them that know no better take their portion in these things, but the Christian may not call earth his all.

5. Take heed of growing remiss in your work. You now take pains; do so while you live. Think not after a while you may relieve yourselves, and go over your old stock. The Scriptures still afford new things to them that search them. Continue searching.

How can you expect God's blessing, or your people's attention, if you be careless in your work.

III. By way of *counsel*. I know you will take the advice of a friend that wishes well to you and your work. The Lord give you counsel, and enable you to receive it.

1. Be well acquainted with your own hearts. Converse with them, and take pains with them. See that the good work be wrought and going on there. Fetch your applications from thence, that you may speak with feeling—such a thing affected me. One heart answers another; therefore employ those methods of which you yourselves have found the benefit. We speak that we have seen. He that ruleth not himself, how shall he rule the church? Speak from the heart.

2. Study closely; especially make the Bible your study. There is no knowledge in which I am more desirous to increase, than the knowledge of the Scriptures. Give attendance to reading, 1 Tim. iv, 13. As long as you live, be still gathering, and increasing your stock. Take pleasure in your study, and be in it as in your element.

3. Let all your performances be plain and scriptural. Affect not fine words, but words which the Holy Ghost teaches; that is sound speech which cannot be condemned. Enticing words of man's wisdom debase your matter; gold needs not be painted. Study plainness. Scripture expressions are what people are used to, and will remember. Consider the lambs of the flock you must take along with you, and do not over-drive them, by being over-long, or over-fine.

4. Be familiar with your people, not high or strange in your behaviour. Converse with them for the good of their souls, and let your common converse with them tend to that, and be seasoned with it. Acquaint yourselves with the state of their souls, their temptations, and their infirmities, and you will know the better how to preach to them, and pray with them. Encourage them to ask you questions about their souls. It will become you to promote good discourse on all occasions.

5. Let Jesus Christ be all in all with you. Study Christ, preach Christ, and live Christ. Remember you are his ministers, the friends of the Bridegroom, and must not preach yourselves, nor live yourselves. How full is Paul of Jesus Christ! It is Christ that will call you to account. Be not full of controversies, but full of Christ. Love the image of Christ wherever you see it, even in those from whom you differ.

IV. By way of *comfort and encouragement*. You must expect to meet with difficulties from the oppositions of Satan and the frowns of the world. You must expect reproach and contempt; it is our present trial. You may be tempted to think all this had been prevented, if you had been of some other employment. You see little success of your ministry, and that is a discouragement—you labour in vain, Jer. xx. 9. but the greatest discouragement is from within, our own weakness; we do not profit ourselves; we fear we shall not hold out. But we have several things to encourage us:

1. The goodness of our work. We are despised, but our work is not despicable. It is work for Christ and the souls of men. It is work that will be successful, though we see not and feel not the success we desire. Can we ever employ ourselves better, than in that which is the proper business of our office?

2. The kindness of our Master. He accepts of our sincere endeavours; he has promised to own us, to be with us to the end of the world, and with each rising generation.

3. The promise of the Spirit to help our infirmities, to assist us in our work, and to make it successful. The promise of the Spirit relates especially to ministers, John xiv. and xvi.

4. The experiences of your predecessors. They have found God all-sufficient to them. They did not, nor do we, repent of entering upon this good work.

5. The prospect of the recompence. Bear contempt; if you be faithful, there is honour before you, and the best preferment.——As to the people that stand related to you,—I would exhort that you report to your company what you have seen and heard, and make one another sensible of the obligations you lie under to love one another, to communicate mutual aid and consolation, and to fear every root of bitterness.

## CHARGE IV.

[*Extract from Mr. Henry's MS. diary.*

April 13, 1708. This day was spent in ordaining Mr. Beynon, at Whitchurch. Mr. Lawrence began, Mr. David Jones, of Salop, preached, 2 Tim. ii. 15. Mr. Doughty prayed. I took his confession, prayed over him, and gave the exhortation. He performed with great seriousness, and gave universal satisfaction.]

My brethren, God is our record, whom we desire to serve with our spirits in the gospel of his Son, that we address ourselves now to this solemn work of ordaining a minister, not in any contempt of, or opposition to, the national establishment; not with design to support a faction, to make a party, or to advance any secular interest of our own, much less do we aim to disturb the public repose. We desire always to be found among the quiet in the land, and to be subject to principalities. We would ren-

der to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's.

With the allowance, and under the protection, of the government that is over us, we are here, by the word and prayer to set apart one to the service of Christ and his church—to recommend him to God by prayer, and to the word of his grace, and then to recommend him to you, to be received and owned as a minister of Christ. The principle we go upon is, that all societies for religious worship ought to have guides and overseers, whose office it is to preach, &c. that to this work men ought to be regularly called, and that those are so which "*be called and chosen to this work by men, who have public authority given them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.*"—Article 23. This authority must be had from Christ. Why they that in other things are employed in the word and prayer, and are stewards, should not be in this, we do not yet see.

But the great thing we are to mind, is the frame of our own hearts. O that we may be sincere and serious in what we do, that we that are ministers may do it with a due sense of the weight of our work, our unworthiness of it, and our unfitness for it.

That you that are now to be set apart may offer yourself to God, a living sacrifice in faith and love, consider what you are going about, whether you give yourself willingly. We have reason to bless those that willingly offer themselves, Neh. xi. 2.

You that attend this work, we desire to give you all just satisfaction. The minister of Christ we are to recommend to you has been well educated, has made trial of his gifts, and met with approbation. You have had some trial of him; it is your desire he should be set apart; and he is now to give an account of his faith.

When our Lord Jesus sent forth his disciples with his blessing and Spirit, he gave them commandments, Matt. x. 5. Acts i. 2. The ministry is an honour, a great honour, but it is also a work, a good work, and as such we commit it to you; not giving you any other commandments than what our Master has given, which are not grievous; no, the yoke of the ministry, as well as of Christianity, is easy and light. We lay no other burthen but *necessary things;* none but what Christ has laid, and what we desire ourselves by the grace of God to receive.

I. Let me desire you always to keep in remembrance what you have been doing to-day, 2 Tim. i. 6. Pause a while. I hope you did not do it rashly, and that now you do not wish it undone; bear it in mind then, *Know ye not what I have done to you,* John xiii. 12. I hope this day's work will leave upon you a truly indelible character, which you will never forget.

1. Think oft of the confession of faith you have made; hold it fast, 2 Tim. i. 14. cleave to the truths of God, and contend earnestly for them. Your foundation is good, keep to it, and take care what you build upon it, 1 Cor. iii. 12.

2. Think oft of the solemn vows with which you have now bound your souls. Keep what you delivered, and peruse it sometimes. Thy vows are upon me, O God. Remember these bonds, examine yourselves by them, and excite yourselves with them.

3. Think oft of the prayers that have been put up for you. Do nothing to frustrate those prayers. If our prayers return into our own bosoms, Ps. xxxv. 13. we are no losers; but we would be gainers.

4. Think of the place you are in, and those that are gone before you here. See what Christ says to his disciples, John iv. 37, 38. yet compare v. 36. Here has been a good foundation laid: you come among a people that I hope retain something of what they have heard and received; let that encourage you. Yet I hope you will break up the fallow ground.

5. Think of the time of your entrance, when death has been busy among us, and let it awaken you to diligence. They being dead, yet speak to us that survive.

6. Think of the expectations of your people from you. If that will open you a wide door, you have it. They promise themselves much from God through you. Let them have joy of you, and you shall have joy in them. I desire to bless God that I see this day: it is an answer to prayer.

II. Let me beg of you to keep the charge of the Lord your God. That good thing which is committed to you, keep.

1. That which God has committed to you by our ordination. God is to be glorified; the kingdom of Christ is to be supported; religious assemblies are to be kept up in order to the maintaining of religion. You are intrusted with the vessels of the sanctuary; you are to be messengers to keep up the correspondence between God and his people; see 1 Cor. x. 31; xiv. 26; xiv. 4. Col. iii. 17. walk according to these rules. You will be called to account of this trust: receive it with that charge, Ezra viii. 28, 29. and that which refers to it, Isa. lii. 11.

2. That which the people have committed to you by their choice. Expect not that they should follow you with an implicit faith; but they have intrusted you to search the Scriptures for them. They have taken you not to have dominion over their faith, but to be a helper of their holiness and joy. Feed the sheep, feed the lambs; you are their guide. Be true to the trust committed to you. Watch for their souls.

ıb. xiii. 17. save them from death, do what you
ı. In order to the keeping of this charge, suffer
vord of exhortation, a word which I would faith-
ly address to myself, as well as to you, as our
ties are similar. God expects much from me, and
expects much from you. May we hear his will,
d render to it the fullest obedience.

(1.) Let us keep close to the word of God as our
le. You are to minister the gospel of the grace
God. Keep to that gospel as a gospel of grace.
ıey that went to teach had the book of the law
th them, 2 Chron. xvii. 9. Fetch your knowledge
ım the Scriptures, all your arguments, your lan-
age, your examples, and your illustrations. Scrip-
ral preaching is the best, and a Scripture conver-
tion.

(2.) Let us keep up our communion with God,
th in secret and in all our public performances.
ıt us endeavour to realize eternal objects. Let us
el the power of those truths, and the obligation of
ose laws, of which we speak to others. God gives
s prophets leave to be free with him; let us use
ır freedom; let us not be strangers to our Master.
is our privilege that we are oft called to prayer;
t our souls be with God in every prayer.

(3.) Let us keep conscience void of offence. How
se can we expect God's presence, and strength, and
essing? This was Paul's care, Acts xxiv. 16. We
ofess to have a tenderness of conscience, and let
is be manifested upon every occasion. Let it be
ıily seen that we cannot satisfy ourselves in the
ımmission of any sin, nor in the neglect of any
ıty. If we walk not in God's counsels, how can
e expect to profit his people. Take heed of sin;
ou spoil your ministry if you suffer that worm at
ıe root.

4. Let us ever be active. We have constant work,
e must either be bringing into our treasuries or
e distributing from them. Fill up your time: a
ınister's time should especially be precious. Let
s gather as we spend; let us love our studies; let
s give attendance to reading; and fear every thing
hich has the appearance of negligence.

(5.) Let us keep humble, having low thoughts of
ırselves, of what we do, and what we are capable
f doing. The clothing of humility is the best dis-
nguishing habit of a minister. Let us be distrust-
ıl of ourselves, that we may depend upon Christ.
et us be conscious of our own unworthiness, that
e may stoop to the meanest. Servants must stoop,
nd become all things.

(6.) Let us keep the peace. We are in Christ's
ingdom, appointed to be preservers of the peace.
et us study to live peaceably with those of opposite
entiments to ourselves. Let us be offensive to none,
nd obliging to all. Let not the gospel of peace be
ıreached contentiously.

(7.) Let us keep Christ upon our hearts. In this
let us be followers of blessed Paul, who was so full of Christ. Every sermon must contain Christ. Every action must be performed in his strength, and every trial endured in his name. Let men have opportunity of taking knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus.

(8.) Let us keep heaven in our eye, and be encouraged in the difficulties of our work. Heaven will make amends for all. The faithful labourer can never be a loser; he shall find his reward at last.

I would address the members of this congregation:

How earnestly do I desire your welfare, to hear that your souls prosper, and that your conversation is as becomes the gospel! I have reason to bear you much upon my heart; I have done so, and I hope shall while I live. I often call to remembrance the days of old, the years I spent in communion with you, and now desire,

1. You would not forget the ministers you have had with you. You have been as a field that the Lord has blessed. God has sown plentifully among you. You have had the good word of your ministers. I remember my father, in a sermon in 1673, say, there were three things for which he praised the people of Whitchurch: "That they were sound in their judgments, not carried about with the wind of opinions; that they were of one mind and way; and that they had none of those merely worldly clubs and fellowships that are in some other towns, among professors, whereby a great deal of harm is done both to themselves and to their profession." Is it so still? May it ever be so!

2. That you would encourage your present minister. I rejoice in the general satisfaction you have in your choice. I trust he is come among you in the fulness of the gospel of Christ. He has himself desired, and I second it in your presence, your prayers and your practice. Let me add, be free with him, not strange to him. Inquire the law at his mouth; ask good questions, and you will have good answers. Love him, think all little enough you can do for him, and especially adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. Bear contempt and reproach with meekness, and do not return either the one or the other. That which honours your profession and minister, will be your own honour. Live so that he that sows and they that reap may rejoice together for ever.

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## CHARGE VI.

[*Mr. Henry's MSS. contain no information respecting the person to whom this charge was given, nor the time of its delivery.*]

THAT which now remains, is to address an exhortation to you, my brother, now solemnly set apart to the

work of the ministry. Think you hear Christ saying to you, as to his disciples, *Know ye what I have done to you*, John xiii. 12. I say, What Christ has done, for it is he that has called you into your ministry, 1 Tim. i. 13. I hope you have such a sense of what Christ has done to you, what he has wrought upon your soul, as that your impression of it will abide upon you, so that nothing would induce you to leave the master you have chosen, nor to abandon that good work which he has appointed for you. You have received a commission from the Lord Jesus, to be an officer in his kingdom, the apostles were extraordinary ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20. Ministers are his servants to carry on his gracious designs. You have bound your soul with a bond, faithfully to do the work of a minister. Now it is requisite you should rightly understand what the trust is that is committed to you, and that you have accepted: see 1 Tim. ii. 6. It is a great trust, and you must shortly give account.

I. There is that which is committed to us ministers in common with all Christians, our precious souls. Let me charge this upon every one of you, Prov. iv. 23. Keep a watchful jealous eye upon your own hearts. We that are ministers especially, that it may not be said, we have kept the vineyards of others, but our own vineyard we have not kept, Cant. i. 6. Take heed to thyself in the first place, 1 Tim. iv. 16. Acts xx. 28. Look well to the state of your soul, that you may be able to speak experimentally. Look well to the frame of your spirit. Be concerned that you gain spiritual advantage from the sermons you preach to others. We have an advantage above others, in frequent praying and meditation.

II. There is that which is committed to us as ministers. There are things we solemnly charge you with. The Levites had their particular trust, and the Christian minister also has his work. He that enters into a service has various things committed as trusts to him.—I would remind you of your duty.

1. You must faithfully explain and apply the oracles of God. The book of the law was in the custody of the priests. Some churches put the Bible into the hands of ministers when they ordain them, and very significantly. Search the Scriptures; take heed of misinterpreting them, of wresting them, 2 Pet. iii. 16. and of handling them deceitfully. You have a gospel to preach, not to make. Compare spiritual things with spiritual. In plain texts keep to the plain sense, and in difficult ones be modest.

2. You must faithfully administer the ordinances of Christ. The preaching of the word is his appointment, 2 Tim. iv. 2. Prepare for it; manage it as an ordinance of Christ, for your advancing of his honour and the interest of his kingdom, 2 Cor. iv. 5. Prayer is an ordinance of Christ; observe the intentions of it: to that, as well as to the word, you are to give yourselves, Acts vi. 4. You are the people's mouth to God, and must declare to God all their concerns, as you must declare to them all God's counsel. The Lord's day is an ordinance of Christ; keep up the honour of it, that you may keep up the power of it. The sacraments are peculiarly ordinances of Christ: regard the institution, and adhere to it.

3. You must faithfully maintain the truths of the gospel: you are trusted with the custody of them, and must be able to convince gainsayers, and to give a reason for the hope which is in you, 1 Pet. iii. 15. Handle the truths of the gospel in your preaching as if they were not controverted, yet be furnished with answers to them that contradict. Betray not any truth of Christ by deserting it. Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, Jude 3. Christ's advocates shall never want instructions. Put on resolution. Set your face as a flint. You may speak as one having authority. Be jealous for the honour of the truth.

4. You must faithfully preside in religious assemblies. You must hold Christ's courts in his name, and not in your own; for his honour, and not for your own, Zech. iii. 7. Let every thing be done decently and in order, that an unbeliever may see God is with you, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. The holy convocation is a divine appointment; do your part in it according as it is appointed for the glory of God's name, the keeping up the appearance of religion, and the promoting of Christian love; all which are earnests of heaven.

5. You must faithfully witness against sin, for it is God's enemy; you are his advocates. Bear your testimony against it, and against all appearances of it, and approaches towards it. In this manifest zeal, John ii. 17. and witness against evil wherever you see it. There are some that must be rebuked sharply. Suffer not sin upon them, lest you bear sin for them, Lev. xix. 17. Be bold for God, and not afraid of the face of man.

6. You must faithfully separate between the precious and the vile. You must distinguish in your preaching, that you may not strengthen the hands of the wicked, nor make the hearts of the righteous sad, Ezek. xiii. 22. In administering special ordinances, you must pay great attention to personal character. You must impart holy things to holy persons. You are a steward of these mysteries, 1 Cor. iv. 1. and you must consider what men really are.

7. You must faithfully comfort afflicted consciences. We give you a special charge of them, for Christ has a special care of them, Isa. xl. 1, 2. Use them tenderly, study how to speak a word in season to them, to heal their wounds, and yet not to heal them slightly. Teach them to fetch their comfort from Jesus Christ. Direct them to him, as their city of refuge. Show them the way. If they hearken not to you for anguish of spirit, yet continue.

8. You must faithfully intercede for the church d people of God. You are intrusted with this re, Isa. lxii. 6, 7. You are to bear Zion's in- rests much upon your heart. Public persons must of public spirits. The priests, the Lord's minis- rs, Joel ii. 17. Mal. i. 9. stand between the living d the dead. If they be prophets, let them pray, Jer. xvii. 18. It is every one's work, but yours espe- ılly. In religious assemblies, pray for all Chris- ın congregations. Prize the communion of saints. 9. You must faithfully transmit that which is com- tted to you, to the rising generation. We charge u with the lambs of the flock; feed them, lead em into the green pastures. Christ has care of em, Isa. xl. 11. and expects you should. There is ılk for babes, in preaching, in visiting the families ıder your charge; you must be a teacher of babes, r Christ is, and he is one full of meekness and mpassion.

And now, brother, you see what is committed to u. I hope these things do not make you repent ur choice, or despair of going through with it. You ıow who can render you sufficient for these things, Cor. ii. 16. Be animated by the greatness of the ıdertaking, and not disheartened.

III. Let me say something to quicken you; and is also give me leave to transfer to myself, for I ed it. Let me consider,

1. The things are of vast importance that I am em- oyed about; dealing for an eternal God, with im- ortal souls, about their everlasting state. Those at are concerned about the lives and estates of their ıtients and clients, have need to be careful; much ore those that are concerned about precious souls.

2. My Master's eye is always upon me. He sees e when I trifle, or do his work deceitfully and care- ssly. If I be slothful, and vain, and remiss, he ıows it, or if I bury my talent. O that I could t him always before me.

3. My time is very precious, and my day hasten- g to a period, 2 Pet. i. 13. John ix. 4. I have lost great deal of time, which I am concerned to redeem. know not how little may be before me. I may die, be silenced. Look into the grave, and be more ligent.

4. I have a great opportunity of doing good, if I be faithful, and of serving Christ, being a worker together with God. I may be the instrument of saving a soul from death, and of bringing sinners from darkness to light. It is good work I am about, more honourable than any other. I magnify my office, though ashamed of myself.

5. I must shortly give account, either with joy or grief, according as I am, or am not, faithful, Heb. xiii. 17. I am a watchman, and it will be awful if the blood of them that perish be required at my hand. How have I traded with my talent? and what will my doom be?

IV. Let me say something to encourage you.

1. You are employed in work in which God is working with you,—you do not fight uncertainly, 1 Cor. ix. 26. Mark xvi. 20. The word of God in your mouth shall accomplish that for which it is sent, Isa. lv. 11. it shall have the designed success, though not the desired success.

2. You shall find his grace sufficient for you, 2 Cor. xii. 9. If you go about your work in his strength, you shall receive strength, 2 Cor. iii. 5. 1 Cor. xiv. 10. Christ has said to his ministers, Lo I am with you always. The Spirit was particularly promised to the disciples or ministers, to lead them into all truth, Phil. iv. 13.

3. We serve a Master, that if we be faithful to him, makes the best of us, and is not extreme to mark what we do amiss. Christ bore with his disci- ples, because they continued with him. We are under grace, and not under the law.

4. You have many encouraging examples before you. Our fathers bore their testimony to the grace of God. As God was with them, he will be with us. They were no better than his grace made them. We that have had our hands long at this work, will speak well of our Master and his work, though we have reason to be ashamed of ourselves.

5. Great will be your reward in heaven if you be faithful. You may meet with difficulties; you set out in a discouraging time; but let none of these things move you, 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. The souls you win, and the sufferings you bear, will be pearls in your crown.

# FUNERAL SERMONS.

## SERMON I.

[*Preached July 7th, 1693, at the Funeral of Elizabeth Young, after an illness of fourteen weeks.*]

ISAIAH xxxviii. 12.

*He will cut me off with pining sickness.*

HEZEKIAH having recovered his health, is here reflecting upon his sick-bed thoughts. It is good to do so when God has delivered us *from our fears*, Ps. xxxiv. 4. to make us so much the more thankful.

1. Observe in general, that that which Hezekiah expected when he sickened, was to die of this sickness. It is good for us to take all occasions to think and speak of death approaching, not for frightening, but for quickening, us. We are apt to put far from us the evil day. We must be dying daily, 1 Cor. xiii. 31. but every fit of sickness is a warning, and it is good to be ready for the worst. We are apt in such a case to flatter ourselves.

2. That it is particularly expressed by God's cutting of him off with pining sickness: Cut me off, as the cloth, when the web is finished, is cut off from the loom. Our life is weaving, our days pass like the shuttle, Job vii. 6. every day brings us so much nearer our end, and then death comes and cuts off the thread. While we live we are weaving; the question is, what kind of web it is, whether it be not the spider's web, Isa. lix. 5, 6. It must all be looked over again. Think, how will this look in the piece when I must give up the account?—We read it, Cut me off with pining sickness.

DOCTRINE I. That death when it comes, cuts us off, as a flower or branch is cut off when it is in the midst of its flourishing, Job xiv. 2. as a thread is cut off, or as a criminal is *cut off* by the sword of justice.

1. It cuts off our days, v. 10. puts an end to them, a full period,—time shall be no more. Whether they have been pleasant or unpleasant days, busy days or idle days, death cuts them off; there is an end of them, often in the midst of them, Job xxi. 21. when we were counting upon many years to come.

2. It cuts off our opportunities. Sabbath days and sacrament days close; harvest days for our souls are no more. It is good to improve them while we have them, for we know not how soon they may be gone.

3. It cuts off our work. It puts a period to the wickedness of the wicked, and makes them cease, Job iii. 17. It also closes the good works of the godly. Many are cut off in the beginning or midst of their usefulness, as we think; yet none of God's witnesses die till they have finished their testimony. There is no working in the grave, Eccl. ix. 10.

4. It cuts off our purposes. In that very day the thoughts perish. We are laying our projects, and death comes and overturns them all, Ps. cxlvi. 4.—his thoughts perish. It is thus with good thoughts, and also bad thoughts. We must therefore make all our purposes with a submission to God's providence, Jam. iv. 14, 15.

5. It cuts off our relations, and puts an end to them. It separates the wife from the husband, and the child from the parent. It parts those that nothing else would part; the place and family that knew us will then know us no more. It separates us from the living.

6. It cuts off all our creature comforts. Though the stream of sensitive delights run never so plentifully, death dries it up, and puts a full stop to it. What pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst, Job xxi. 21.

*Use* I. It concerns us all to sit loose to that from which death will remove us. Die to the world, and to every thing that is in it, 1 Cor. vii. 29. It will be hard cutting off when the affections have been en-

tred in these things, We must not live as those that are to live here always. Expect and prepare for a cutting off. Work as those whose work must shortly cease.

2. It concerns us all to secure to ourselves something from which death will not cut us off. Death cannot cut off an interest in Christ, Rom. viii. 38, 39. It cannot deprive us of our communion with God, but will perfect and complete that. Especially secure a hope that death will not cut off, even a hope that enters into that within the veil.

DOCTRINE II. That when we or our friends are cut off by death, it is God that doth it, *He will cut me off.* Death is his servant, and acts by warrant from him. Our times are in his hand, Ps. xxxi. 15. He kills and makes alive. We are apt to impute it to this or that second cause, but it is the Lord's doing. Christ has the keys of death and the grave, Rev. i. 18. Those that cut off themselves, snatch those keys out of his hand. We must not go before we are called.

1. This should satisfy us as to our own death, that we shall not die till God cuts us off, and if he be our friend, he will be sure to order it in the best way and time; therefore if God be ours, death is ours. Our time is an appointed time. Those that belong to God, shall be cut off as the corn in its season, Job v. 26. It is not in man's power to cut off till he shall receive permission.

2. As to the death of our friends, see Job xi. 10. it is the Lord, and to murmur at it is to strive with our Maker. David was not like himself, when he was displeased because the Lord had made a breach. This quieted Job when all his children were cut off, Job i. 21.

DOCTRINE III. That some are cut off with pining sickness. Many are cut off suddenly by accidents or distempers, there are no bands in their death, Ps. lxxiii. 4. but others die by lingering diseases. There are many ways out of the world; see Job xxi. 23, 26.

1. Death by pining sickness has in it something of advantage, as it not only gives warning, but time and space to set the house and heart in order. We are commonly so unready,—even those that are habitually ready, yet actually unready,—they need time to get the loins girt, and the lamps trimmed. We cannot promise ourselves this opportunity, therefore we had need be always ready.

2. It has in it a great deal of trouble. It is a sore trial to the faith and patience, gives advantage to Satan, and weakness to the spirits. It is well we have to do with a good master in such a case, else we were undone.

3. However it be, it is of God's ordering; for not only the death itself, but all the circumstance of it, come within his counsel. It is he that *brings us* to death, Job xxx. 23, and he appoints the messenger that shall fetch us. Diseases are his servants, Matt. viii. 8, 9.

*Use* 1. Were I now to speak to those that are under pining sicknesses, I should desire them to observe,—that it is no strange thing,—that it has been the lot of the best;—to set the house and heart in order,—to be patient, and let patience have its perfect work, Jam. i. 4. But one great inconvenience attending pining sickness is, that it restrains from public ordinances; this troubled Hezekiah when he was sick, Isa. xxxviii. 11, 12.

2. Do I speak to any that have been graciously recovered from pining sickness, as Hezekiah; not *cut off*, though the sentence of death was received, 2 Cor. i. 9. You have special reason to say, It is of the Lord's mercy. You were brought very low, and yet helped. Others were cut off by the like sickness, and yet you were spared. It is to try you, what you will do to get ready for the next encounter. Let not such recoveries make you secure.

3. I speak to those that are in health.

(1.) Pity and pray for those that are under pining sickness. We should weep with those that weep; thus we may do something towards the easing of their burthen. Christ had a particular concern for one that he knew had been long ill, John v. 6. Look with great compassion upon those whose afflictions have been long continued, and carefully shun all impatience.

(2.) Prepare for pining sickness, and to be cut off by it. The same afflictions abide us. Lay in a stock of evidences, of experiences, and of promises; such as Isa. xxxiii. 24. Ps. lxxiii. 26; xli. 3. 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 16, 17. Take heed of doing any thing which will make a sick bed uneasy. Make sure a place in your Father's house; and then the matter is not great though the way be tedious. Heaven will make amends for all.

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## SERMON II.

[*Preached at the funeral of William Bolland, September 2nd,* 1698.]

JOB xiv. 10.

*But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?*

HOLY Job, now a sick man, looks upon himself as a dying man. Thoughts of death are not unseasonable when we are in health, but it is an inexcusable thoughtlessness when we are sick, to put far from us the arrests of death; and it is a blessed thing to be in such a condition, that the thoughts of death may not be a terror to us when we are sick, nor make a sick-bed uneasy to us. Our deceased friend in

his illness, fixed upon this scripture as the subject of his thoughts, and which he desired might be the subject of mine and yours this day. The text excellently illustrates a plain truth.

DOCTRINE. That man is a dying creature.

1. It is spoken of *man* twice in the text. In the original two different words are used, one meaning the strong man, and the other the weak man; for the grave is one of the places in which the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, meet together.

(1.) Man dies *though* he be *(Geber)* a mighty man. All his might will not secure him: death reaches the highest, conquers the strongest, and humbles the proudest. No man's honour is a discharge from that war, no man's strength is victory in that combat, Eccl. viii. 8. Ps. xlix. 6, &c.

(2.) Man dies *because* he is *(Adam)* a man of the earth, Gen. ii. 7; iii. 19. his original from the earth, his constitution earthy—his foundation in the dust. That which is earthy, is mouldering and crumbling. Man dies because he is the son of Adam, sinful fallen man. By Adam death came into the world, Rom. v. 12.

2. That which is here said of man is, that he is a dying creature. *Man dieth*, dies daily, some or other going off every day. Man is dying: think much of this.—Our Creator lives for ever, and cannot die; he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; not subject to any change, much less to that great change. This is matter of comfort in reference to man's mortality, that God is immortal, Ps. xc. 2, 3; cii. 26. Angels die not.—Now the mortality of man is here elegantly described—*Man dieth;* that is the truth descanted upon, and is described by what happens to man.

(1.) Before death, he *wasteth away*, he is weakened, so the word is; this is the harbinger of death, to tell it is coming; nay, it helps it forward.

Even in health we are wasting away. Life is like a candle, as long as it burns it wastes away, and is hastening down to its socket. The oil of natural life is still wasting, so that man dies daily, *i. e.* he is daily going down to death, 1 Cor. xv. 31. the natural heat is still declining, so that as soon as we are born we begin to die, and in the midst of life we are in death. God has graciously provided recruits by food, but we still are wasting, our time lessening.

In old age especially we are wasting away. The strength then wastes so fast that it is no better than labour and sorrow, Ps. xc. 10. The nearer life comes to its period, the quicker is its motion. The decay in old age is very sensible; the strength wastes, the senses waste, and grow less able to perform their functions: see a description of this waste, Eccl. xii. Defer not repentance to old age.

In sickness we waste away. The waste by distempers is sometimes quicker, sometimes slower, but all diseases tend to the destruction of the frame, they waste the beauty, waste the strength, Ps. xxxix. 11. weaken it in the way, Ps. cii. 23. How soon doth a fever or other acute distemper waste man away, and by degrees a consumption doth it.

*Inference* 1. See how vain man is: every man, at his best estate, wasting away from time to time.—What little reason have we to be proud, or to be confident of any thing for the future, while we are in a constant decay!

2. See how foolish they are who waste any part of that upon their lusts, which wastes so fast of itself: who hasten these decays by their intemperance, and sacrifice their lives to their lusts.

(2.) In death, *man giveth up the ghost.* It is but one word in the original—man *expires* by a sudden stroke. Some indeed are long in dying, others die suddenly, but both dying, or having wasted away, at length *give up the ghost, or spirit.*

At death the soul leaves the body. Man then expires, *i. e.* breathes out his last. His breath *goes forth*, and returns not again. Think what those bodies are, when the breath, the spirit, the soul, are gone; clods of clay. What an immediate change there is in them! how the countenance alters, the strength and motion gone! There is no way of retaining the spirit, Eccl. viii. 8.

At death, the soul returns to God who gave it.—We must then give up the spirit, *i. e.* resign it to the Father of spirits. The soul will then be required, Luke xii. 20. and whether we will or no, we must yield. We see the deserted body; but we know not the way of the departing soul. It is *given* up as a trust.

*Inference.* Give up your spirits to God now, to be sanctified, that you may with comfort give them up to him at death, Ps. xxxi. 5.

(3.) After death, *where is he?* Zech. i. 5.

1. He is not where he was; there he is seen no more; his place knows him no more, Job vii. 10. compare *v.* 21. Thou shalt seek me, but I shall not be. Where is he? Go into his house, and he is not there,—into his shop, and into the solemn assemblies. While he lived he was here, but now where is he? He is not where, perhaps, he was busy, and made a figure; he is not where he was useful, and could ill have been spared. Think of this in reference to the place where you now are, and let it engage you to fill it up with duty. Yet a little while, and you shall be here no more—your place will be empty.

2. He is somewhere, so some read it. *Is he now?* Yes, he is. When we die, there is not an end of us; when we cease to be here, we do not cease to be. Death is the separation of soul and body, but not the annihilation of either. Those that live like brutes surely expect to die like brutes.

3. It is a very awful consideration, to think where they are that have given up the ghost, and where we shall be when we give it up.

Think where the body is. It lies in the cold, and

ark, and silent grave—the house appointed for all, ob xxx. 23. Where is it? Why, it is with the worms, ob xvii. 13, 14. It is buried out of our sight. It is in he land of darkness. That body that was pampered, nd provided for with so much care, is now a neg-ected carcass. Let me look into the grave, and hink it will be my bed shortly.

Think where the soul is,—*where is that?*

It is gone into that world of spirits to which we re so much strangers. It is a mystery to us where t is. Destruction and death have a covering which ve cannot see through. Death is an awful change, a way that we have not gone heretofore.

It is gone into an unchangeable state; it is gone nto eternity. Its state of trial and probation is at n end, and it is fixed immovably in a state of re-ompence. After death the judgment takes place, Heb. ix. 27.

If it were a wicked, unsanctified soul, it is gone lown to the congregation of the dead and damned: f a gracious, sanctified soul, it is gone into the re-ions of light and bliss. As Christ has showed this listribution at the last day, in the parable, Matt. xiv. 31. so the same at death, in the parable, Luke vi. 19, &c. Sinners' souls are required: the souls of saints are received into the bosom of Abraham, Phil. i. 23. Consider what has been said, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

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## SERMON III.

[*Preached February 2nd, 1702, at the Funeral of my cousin Madocks, aged about* 53.]

GENESIS xlix. 18.

*I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.*

THESE dying words of aged Israel are very expressive of the dying thoughts of many an honest Israelite indeed, and may be of use to us both for our direction and comfort, that whether we live or die, we may live and die waiting for the salvation of the Lord. Good old Jacob is here making his will, leaving to his children his dying charge, and dying blessing; and in the midst of all, these words come in a little before he gathered up his feet into the bed, and gave up the ghost.

1. Some interpreters undertake to find out a connexion between these words, and what goes before. The text follows upon the blessing of *Dan*, which is double, *v.* 16, 17. He foresaw, and foretold, that here should be a famous judge of that tribe, viz. Samson, who should be a scourge to the enemies of Israel, and this salvation David waited for; yet looking through this to Christ, of whom Samson was a type, and to the complete salvation wrought out by him; for Joshua did but *begin* the deliverance, Judg. xiii. 5.

2. I rather think it has no dependence upon the context. I suppose Jacob spent with speaking, and ready to faint, and die away, and with these words he recovers himself; or, if he must break off here, with these words he pours out his soul into the bosom of his God. This was like taking a cordial; this puts new life into him. A pious breathing after God is never impertinent. That may be uttered very affectionately, which doth not come in methodically. But what is the salvation dying Jacob waits for?

1. Christ, whom he had spoken of, *v.* 10. He saw his day at a distance, as Abraham did. The Old-Testament saints were expectants of the promised seed, waited for the dawning of that day, more than they that wait for the morning.

2. The better country, that is, the heavenly. Jacob had confessed himself a pilgrim, *ch.* xlvii. 9. and see what construction the apostle makes of that confession, Heb. xi. 13, 14.—the salvation of the soul. Though Jacob dies in a strange place, to which he was but lately removed, yet he comforts himself with the end of his faith, 1 Pet. i. 9. compare *v.* 10. When he is going to enjoy the salvation, he comforts himself with this, *I have waited.* This occurred to my thoughts on this occasion, when we have parted with one whom I have long known to be a humble, quiet, cheerful Christian, who bore with great evenness the affliction of her pilgrimage; the loss of a loving husband, twenty years ago; and all the cares of a sorrowful widowhood ever since; and at last the fatigues of a long weakness, quieting herself with this, *God is all-sufficient for me and mine.* Unless this had been her delight, she would have perished in her affliction, Ps. cxix. 92. She was one that *waited for the salvation of the Lord.*

DOCTRINE I. It is the character of a living saint to *wait for the salvation of the Lord*, Lam. iii. 26.

1. *Christ* as our *way to heaven* is to be *waited on.* Faith in him, is a waiting on him, confiding in him, relying on him, with a resolution to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes. The great salvation which multitudes *neglect*, we must regard, being led by the conduct of the Captain of our salvation, Ps. xxvii. 14. All our expectation must be from Christ; see Ps. lxii. 1, 5. neither is there salvation in any other, Acts iv. 12. We must wait for his law: we must attend Christ as our physician, to save us from our disease; and as our advocate, to save us from the sentence of the law.

2. *Heaven* as our *rest in Christ*, is to be waited for. Eternal salvation has Christ for its author, nay, Christ himself is the matter of that happiness, John xvii. 24. Phil. i. 21, 23. It is the salvation of the Lord, Ps. l. 23; xci. 16. Heaven is salvation completed, when the saved of the Lord shall return with songs. To *wait for this salvation*, is,

(1.) To believe it as a real thing. Though we wait for that we see not, Rom. viii. 24. yet we believe it, Heb. xi. 1.—that God doth not deceive us in what he proposes to us: that it is a thing attainable in the way which Christianity prescribes: see 1 John v. 10. It is a great thing to believe that an immortal soul should be for ever happy in the vision and fruition of the eternal God, and that the body should rise again. We must resolve these things into the Scriptures, and the power of God.

(2.) To desire it as a valuable thing. To have the affections of the heart towards it, as that which will be a perfect freedom from all misery, and a perfect fruition of all good. Waiting supposes longing, Ps. cxxx. 6. to desire this more than any thing in this world; *loving this salvation*, Ps. lxx. 4. loving heaven better than earth, not only better than hell. This is the great evidence of grace in the soul. The Christian desires the great salvation as a deliverance from sin, and from the world. Know wherein it consists, and desire it as such. Wilt thou be made whole? thus made whole? in this way, and upon these terms?

(3.) To depend upon it as a recompence; as the husbandman depends upon the harvest for a recompence of his seed and labour, Jam. v. 7. as the servant depends upon his wages, having respect to it, Heb. xi. 26. It is worth while to do and suffer, to lose and lay out, in hope of this. Lord, this is that which I depend upon as a felicity, not upon the world, its smiles or promises, but upon heaven. In thee do I hope is a good plea, and often used, Ps. xxxi. 1. It is that upon which we are caused to hope, and that to which we would ever resort.

(4.) To tarry for it as a reversion. Those that will deal with God must deal upon trust, for a happiness in reserve and out of sight. All the time of a Christian's stay in this world is a time of expectation. He has not what he aims at, what he would have. We live by faith, 2 Cor. v. 7. The world would come in with its offers in the meanwhile: No, saith the believer, I reserve myself for something that is reserved for me; therefore I will do nothing which can lessen spiritual good in my esteem.

*Use* 1. Choose this salvation as your portion, fix upon it this day. Let others choose as they please, this I choose; here is Christianity begun.

2. Eye this salvation; let your affections be ever towards it. This is Christianity in the progress of it; affection in heaven, and conversation in heaven.

Doctrine II. It is the comfort of a dying saint thus to have hoped for the salvation of the Lord. Holy Jacob fastens upon this. Dying circumstances are usually melancholy ones, but this alters the property of them. If I have the testimony of my conscience that I have waited for the salvation of the Lord,

Then doubts of my sincerity are hereby resolved. I have had many infirmities, but I have not taken up with the world for my portion, as I have waited for superior good. When we are to seek for evidences, this may stand us in good stead. Now, Lord, remember, (2 Kings xx. 3.) is a good appeal. I have waited for thy salvation; thou knowest my uprightness.

Distempers of body are hereby eased. Sick people are expecting what will be the issue; but if the salvation of the Lord be the great thing waited for, nothing can come amiss. They may look up to God to undertake their cause. God can help when none else can, Ps. xxvii. 13.

Disappointments in the world are hereby balanced. This I hoped, and the other I waited for, but my purposes are broken off, Job xvii. 11. but I have waited for a salvation which will not disappoint me. It will come, and it will make me amends when it comes. Heaven will more than equal present satisfactions and make up for present disappointments.

Death itself has hereby the property of it altered. The fear of death may very well be swallowed up in the hope of heaven. What hurt can death do to one that knows it is his passage to heaven?

*Use* 1. Be diligent to prepare for death. Make sure your title *to this salvation*; depend upon it, and lay up your treasure in it.

2. Then be desirous of it, *patiently desirous*; not to anticipate it, or complain of life, but—O that I were at rest, that I were in heaven, my home, my Father's house.

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## SERMON IV.

[*Preached January 13th, 1704, at the Funeral of Mr. Benjamin Club, who died the day he was twenty years old.*]

### Psalm xc. 6.

*In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.*

Here is a short account of a short life; and life at the longest is but short compared with eternity: but some lives are shorter than others, witness the grave into which we have now been looking: to such a life the text is especially applicable, though true of life in general. Man's life is measured by days even Methuselah's is so, though his years were hundreds, Gen. v. 27. and Jacob's, whose years were scores, Gen. xlvii. 9. but here it is measured but by *one day*. Such is our life; a shadow, a vapour, and here like *grass*, *v.* 5.—birth and death but the morning and evening of the same day.

1. Here is a hopeful morning, it *flourisheth*, looks green and pleasant, grateful to the eye, and promising to the expectation; yet still it is but the flourish-

ıg of grass, which rises out of the earth, and re-
res into it.

2. Here is a mournful evening, *It is cut down.* et it alone, and it will quickly wither of itself, ge will wither it and spoil its beauty; but here it oth not stay for that, it is *cut down*, and so *withered.*

DOCTRINE. That many are removed out of the rorld, when just entering into it, presently after hey were settled in it. Many a life is withered by leath, just when it is growing up and beginning to lourish. The distance of time between their grow-ng up and withering, is but like that between morn-ng and evening, Job iv. 20; vii. 21.

1. Some wither before they grow up, are crushed ınd plucked like a rose in the bud; they are hurried ɔut of the world before it was taken notice of that hey were in it. This might have been our case, but God has spared us.

2. Others grow long before they wither; like the rose, whose leaves are left to hang on till they drop off of themselves; whose thread is not cut off, but breaks with the weight of its own years, years in which they own they have no pleasure. The longer we grow, the longer account we shall have to make, and we must wither at last.

3. But there are some that *grow up* and *flourish*, and then wither presently; but a few hours, as it were, between their bloom and their fall.

(1.) Let us view the bright side of the cloud, and see this grass *flourishing* and *growing up*; see man in his *best estate*; suppose him to flourish, not only like the weak and tender grass, but like the green bay-tree; looking forth *as* the morning, *in* the morn-ing.

Let us see man in the fulness of his sufficiency, grown up to bodily strength, and flourishing in that; past the common diseases of childhood, and arrived to maturity, in the full strength, Job xxi. 23. Man that in a course of nature has many years to live, that seems to have a large stock of oil in the vessel for the lamp of life to burn upon, vigorous, strong, healthful, lively, and yet withered; for death goes not either by seniority or probability.

Let us view man grown up to a settlement in the world, having formed standing relations for life, and settled in the business and employments of life. A man may have just entered into a flourishing trade, and yet be unsettled by death in a short time. The candle may be put out of a sudden, and the sun may go down at noon.

Or see man grown up to a place in Christian com-munion, and flourishing in it; numbered among adult believers, and bearing up the name of Christ in the world. This makes the morning hopeful more than any thing: the face set Sion-ward, and the way thither—asked with care. Those flourish most that flourish in the *courts of our God*, Ps. xcii. 13.—branches of righteousness, and plants of renown; as none are more grievous than the degenerate plants of a strange vine.

(2.) Let us view the dark side of the cloud—this grass withering; a consideration very proper to pre-pare the way of the Lord, Isa. xl. 6, 7. When we are convinced of the vanity of the world, we are prepared to entertain the doctrine of the reality of unseen things, and the grace of Christ. Yet a little while and that which grew up and flourished is *cut down*, and *withered*, Ps. ciii. 15, 16.

See a flourishing life *withered* and gone, death in the midst of life; unsuspected diseases arrest the body that was healthful. We know not what seeds of sickness we carry about with us, nor how death is working in us, digging our grave like a mole un-seen; a fire not blown consuming; like some that have seemed wealthy men, yet break of a sudden. Who would be proud of such bodies, or fond of them.

See flourishing comforts in such a life removed. Parents, yoke-fellows, friends, sitting down under the shadow of this flourishing life, with delight, ex-ceeding glad of the gourd, but it perishes in a night, Jonah iv. 6, 7. We said, The same shall comfort us, Gen. v. 29. but it proves otherwise, our hopes dis-appointed; providence making those the grief of the middle age, that it was expected would have been the comfort of the old age. Many such things are with him; we see them daily.

*Use.* This is very improvable,

1. As to our relations and friends, that are near and dear.

If they flourish and grow up, let us *sit loose* to them, and to the comfort we have in them. Let us remember they do but *flourish as the grass*; and let us moderate our delight in them and lower our ex-pectations from them, accordingly. Let them not have that share of our love, and joy, and trust, that Christ should have. Look upon them all as wither-ing comforts at the best. That perhaps may prove least safe which is most dear, and that may grieve us most in which we promise ourselves most comfort. We are unapt scholars, if we are yet to learn the fading nature of these things.

If when they are flourishing and growing up, they be suddenly withered, we must not think it strange, as though some strange thing happened to us. See then that we be not losers in soul by our impatience under the affliction, but gainers in soul by our im-provement of the affliction. Think how we have withered spiritually, and how justly God withers our comforts. It is a time to bring to remembrance, 1 Kings xvii. 18, improvable as a help to keep con-science tender, Job x. 2. I was not enough humbled under former convictions, and former rebukes. The Lord is righteous.

2. As to ourselves. If we have been long *grow-ing*, and not yet withered, we have reason to ad-mire God's patience, that we are not cut down. Many

are taken away in the midst of their days, and we yet spared. O despise not the riches of this forbearance, but improve it. If now flourishing and growing up, let us consult our true interests. It is morning with you, *you are strong;* learn some good lessons from this funeral. If this be so,

(1.) Be not *vain.* Let thoughts of dying make you serious now, and then death itself when it comes will not be so apt to make you melancholy. It is a serious thing to die; be serious in your thoughts of it. Let this give check to the laughter of the fool, Eccl. xi. 9. Use yourselves to serious work, and serious company, and learn to be serious.

(2.) Be not *proud.* This is a humbling consideration: You know not how soon death may come, and change your countenances, and lay your honour in the dust. Where is thy beauty, and where thy ornaments, in the grave?

(3.) Be not *secure.* Flatter not yourselves with the expectation of a long continuance here, when you see so many withered in the midst of their growing up. Often think and speak of changes. Say not, To-morrow shall be as this day, or that your mountain stands strong, Prov. xxvii. 1. Jam. iv. 13.

(4.) Be not *dilatory* in the great business of religion. Put not off the great work, but do it now, lest death come and find it undone. This young man said to those about him on his death-bed, I have found praying hours the sweetest hours, and so will you.

# FAST SERMONS.

## SERMON I.

[*Preached on occasion of a Public Fast, May* 11*th*, 1692.]

ISAIAH viii. 12, 13.

*Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.*

THESE words are part of a sermon preached at a time when the people of Israel were under the prevailing apprehensions of a foreign invasion from Syria, in confederacy with Ephraim, the ten tribes; see *chap.* vii. 1, 2. and after that, an inroad made with a mighty force by Sennacherib, *chap.* viii. 7, 8. It is with reference to both these that the prophet does here comfort and direct the people of God. The work of ministers is not to direct the affairs of states, it is out of their sphere; but to direct the graces of God's people, according to the various outgoings of God's providence. They are so to understand the times, as to know what Israel ought to do, 1 Chron. xii. 32. Observe,

1. His challenge to God's enemies, *v.* 9, 10. He does, as it were, throw down the gauntlet, and bid defiance to them and all their power: Come do your worst, with might or multitude; be your confederacies never so well formed, your plots never so deeply laid; though you bring into the field an army never so numerous, so well armed, so well disciplined, and so well paid; though you be never so confident of success; all this conduct, all this courage, will be so far from preventing, that it will but accelerate and aggravate your ruin. Thus with a holy bravery does he address the enemies, and teach the virgin, the daughter of Sion, to despise them, and to laugh them to scorn, Isa. xxxvii. 22. It is a fruitless attempt, and will appear so at last. Now this assurance is grounded not upon the countenance of second causes, but the presence and presidency of the Almighty: *God is with us*, i. e. the cause is God's, and he will own it. It notes not only his presence with us, but his taking part with us, as captain and leader, and one interested. Where truth, righteousness, and love are, there God is. Encourage yourselves with this: *More are they that be with us, than they that be with them*, 2 Kings vi. 16. If God be with us, infinite wisdom, power, and goodness are with us; and then what can finite powers and policies do, 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8. Rom. viii. 31.

2. His counsel to God's people, in the text. It was generally a time of prevailing fear, and those fears dishonourable to God, disquieting to themselves; and therefore he is here sent to help them against these fears. He speaks experimentally, having been himself *instructed with a strong hand.* Those are likely to teach others effectually, that are themselves thus instructed. That word that comes from the heart will reach to the heart. That which he does here deliver to them, he says he had received from the Lord: see Isa. xxi. 10.

1. He dissuades them from a sinful fear, *v.* 12.

2. He directs them to a gracious fear, *v.* 13.

*For the* 1st. A dissuasion from sinful fear, which it seems was the *way of this people*, *v* 11. It was an epidemical disease, and men are apt to be carried down the stream. *Say ye not, A confederacy.* These words may be understood two ways:

1. Be not associated in their confederacies. Do not join with those that, for the securing of themselves, enter into confederacy with the Assyrians, or any other foreign force; to which it seems many among them, through unbelief and distrust of God and their cause, were inclined. Now, do not thou join with them; *say not, A confederacy*, i. e. think not

of a confederacy, do not go about to secure yourselves by any sinful leagues. We must take heed of joining ourselves in confederacy with any of the disturbers of the peace, and betrayers of the land, either out of restlessness of spirit, as those that are given to change, or out of particular discontents, or fear of the enemies prevailing, or from any other base principle. Though sinners entice thee, consent thou not, Prov. i. 10. Meddle not with them that are given to change, Prov. xxiv. 21. Approve yourselves the quiet in the land. Seek the peace of the nation. This is a caution of which I hope none of you stand in need. It is very hard to have any charity for those, who (whatever their pretences be) at such a day as this talk of making a captain to return into Egypt. Let not my soul come into their secret.

2. Be not afraid of their confederacies. Do not say, A confederacy, to or of every thing that this people say, A confederacy. It is an expression of their fear; they are generally seized with a panic, and talk of nothing but a *confederacy*,—A plot, a plot; dismal news,—Syria is joined with Ephraim. What will become of us?—Must we fight, or must we fly, or must we yield? Thus *their hearts were moved, ch.* vii. 2. Do not you say as they say, *neither fear ye their fear, i. e.* that fear with which they fear, or objectively, that of which they are afraid. We must not be conformed to the fears of this world, Jer. x. 2. Fear not that with which they would terrify you, 1 Pet. iii. 14. Let neither the reports that are abroad, nor the common apprehensions that people have upon them, fasten any terrible impression upon you. *Nor be afraid:* the word signifies such a fright as causes a shaking and trembling, as *ch.* vii. 2. Neither fear you their fear; *much less be so affrighted,* so some read it. The caution is thus doubled the more to encourage them: compare Isa. vii. 4.

Doctrine. That when the enemies of the church have sinful confederacies on foot, its friends should watch against the sinful fears of those confederacies.

1. It is no new thing for the enemies of the church to have their confederacies on foot. Hand joins in hand, and wicked leagues are made. Though the enemies be many, yet their name is *Legion*, incorporated in prosecution of the same cursed designs, Ps. lxxxiii. 3, 5, 7. The dragon and his angels are of one mind to give their honour to the beast, Rev. xvii. 13.

2. There is a lawful fear of these confederacies, which is to be allowed besides that which is natural, for Christianity is not stoicism. There is also a prudential fear; a fear of diligence, such as quickens to the use of lawful means; thus Jehoshaphat feared, 2 Chron. xx. 3. Just and rational fears are of use to sharpen endeavours.

3. But there is a sinful fear of these confederacies, which is to be striven against.

Show I. When is this fear of these confederacies sinful.

1. When it comes from an ill cause—as distrust of God, and of his power and faithfulness. Examine if that be not at the bottom of it;—over-credulity of reports: believing every word; hearkening to every groundless surmise; mistaking the shadow of the mountains for men, and the sunshine upon the waters for blood. Or it proceeds from a conformity to the world, that *wonders after the beast*, Rev. xiii. 4. subscribing to their admiration,—*Who is like the beast?* When our fears arise from hence, they turn into sin: and there is nothing more subtle than the cause of our fears, and which is more commonly palliated with pretences; therefore search them to the bottom.

2. When it produces ill effects; when our fear gets the mastery of us, and plays the tyrant, not only over reason, but over grace; when it fills us, Isa. xxxiii. 14.

(1.) It is sinful when it confounds our spirits, when it puts the soul into disorder, and so disfits it for any duty; when we live in careful suspense, Luke xii. 29. When these fears unhinge our spirits, discompose our souls; when they fill us lying down and rising up; when they deprive us of all self-possession; then they are sinful, Luke xxi. 19.

(2.) When fear clouds our joy, it is evil. We should be always rejoicing in the Lord, and seek consolation in his promises; but when joy is damped by our fears of the confederacies of enemies against us, those fears are excessive. Jehoshaphat feared the invading enemy, and yet went singing to the battle, 2 Chron. xx. 21. It should not be in the power of any creature to hinder our delight in God, Hab. iii. 17.

(3.) When fear conquers our faith, and prevails to its discouragement, it is unseasonable. Faith is our shield, and fears are sinful when they snatch our shield out of our hand. Faith is our cordial, and fears are sinful when they render the cordial useless, as the fear of Peter when he was sinking, Matt. xiv. 30, 31.

(4.) When it clogs our prayers and endeavours; when it diverts us from our duty, draws us from God, deadens and distracts us in our duty; so that we have no heart to stir a step to help ourselves, or to run any hazards, or with any courage to encounter any difficulty;—as Israel in Egypt, Exod. vi. 9. —much more when it puts us upon the use of sinful and irregular means; it is highly exceptionable.

Show II. Why the friends of the church should not be afraid of the confederacies of the enemies of the church.

This fear is contrary to the will of Christ, John xiv. 27. It is opposed to the character of the saints, Ps. cxii. 7. It is against the law of faith and love, 1 John iv. 18. It is displeasing to God, who takes no pleasure in his people's torment. It weakens ourselves, discourages others, dishonours religion, and

gives Satan great advantage. Such are the evil effects of all prevailing fears. I would only suggest, that in this case it is very unreasonable, all things considered, that we should fear the confederacies of the enemies of the church.

1. We are sure of a good God, that can baffle their designs, and turn their counsels headlong; infatuate all their politics, and blast their devices. If we speak of strength and wisdom, these belong to the Most High. *God is with us*, therefore fear not their fear. God sees not as man sees. Prevailing fear of man, evidences a prevailing forgetfulness of God, Isa. li. 12, 13.

2. We are sure of a good cause. If the cause of religion and of truth, the rights of kingdoms and the peace of nations, be a good cause, surely ours is so. Fear argues a distrust of our cause. The providence of God hath by amazing steps led us into the cause, and led us thus far in it; and he that has begun is concerned in honour to finish.

3. We are sure of a good issue at last. Though there may be some difficulty and struggle in the birth, yet there will be joy when the man-child is born. Though it may be long before the top-stone be brought forth, yet it will be produced at last. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the church.

*For the* 2nd. We are here directed to a gracious religious fear—*Sanctify the Lord of hosts*. Having showed us whom we should not fear, he here shows us whom we should fear. Fear is a stream that will have its course. The best way to keep it from overflowing and doing mischief, is to direct it into, and keep it in, the right channel. Such is our Saviour's advice, Luke xii. 5. This is to prevent their walking in the way of the ungodly, as Prov. xxiii. 17. The remedy against imitating sinners, is to be continually in the fear of the Lord.

DOCTRINE. That the gracious fear of God is a special preservative against the prevailing fear of man. The way to be delivered from the fear of the people of the world, is to be governed by the fear by which the people of God are influenced.

Show, I. What this religious fear of God is. It is often put in Scripture for all religion. The fear of the Lord *is the beginning of wisdom*, Prov. ix. 10. the first step towards wisdom, Job xxviii. 28. I shall understand it of that religious fear which has regard to God in reference to his church. When enemies are confederate, dangers great, and mighty things upon the wheel, then,

1. *Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself.* God is here styled the Lord of hosts, for the comfort of his people, who had many and mighty hosts against them, and few or none for them. It is an encouraging title, as Ps. xlvi. 7, 11. Luther's Psalm. *Sanctify*;—as we are said to magnify him, not to make him holy or great, but to esteem him so. Behave towards him as a holy God. His holiness is his most glorious attribute, Isa. vi. 3. *The Lord of hosts.*

2. *Let him be your fear, i. e.* the object of your fear. Do not fear these two kings, but fear God. God is called the *fear of Isaac*, Gen. xxxi. 53.

3. *Let him be your dread.* It is repeated for the more emphasis, the word answers to that other, *v.* 12. and signifies properly, one that terrifies. Fear God more, and then you would fear man less. Now at such a time, when multitudes are saying, A confederacy, a confederacy,—to sanctify God, and to make him our fear and our dread, has these things in it.

(1.) To own his sovereignty. Acknowledge him as the director of all second causes, giving life and law to all their motions. See the most powerful instruments, when they appear most formidable, under his check. Acknowledge the Lord of hosts himself, without dependence upon any creature, nay, upon whom all creatures do depend. See what it is to sanctify God at such a time, Ps. xlvi. 10. *Know that I am God*, the sovereign ruler of all the creatures. Enemies are but the rod in his hand, Isa. x. 5. Every creature is what he makes it.—*Know that the Lord is greater than all gods*, Exod. xviii. 11.

(2.) To observe his outgoings. Take notice of him; his wisdom, power, and goodness in all his motions. To sanctify God, is not only to acknowledge his universal sovereignty, but his particular agency in all events. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, Isa. xxviii. 29. not only the events themselves, but all the circumstances of events. He expects we should consider the operation of his hands, see the outgoings of our God, our King, Ps. lxviii. 24; cvii. 43. God is sanctified when he is taken notice of, Hos. xiv. 9. Stand still and see the salvation of God, Exod. xiv. 13.

(3.) To dread his wrath. To *sanctify* him, and make him our fear, is to stand continually in awe of him, filled with an apprehension of his terrible majesty displayed in his providences. If the power and anger of a mortal worm be so formidable, and his resentments threatening, what then is the power and anger of the great Jehovah, the God to whom vengeance belongs? Ps. lxviii. 35. When God answers in terrible things, it is in righteousness, Ps. lxv. 5. see Ps. lxxvi. 7, 8. The providences of God are compared to the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, Hab. iii. 3, &c. When Sennacherib invaded Judah, this was the lesson to be learned, Isa. xxxiii. 14. *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?*

(4.) To depend upon his mercy. The fear required, is not to drive us from him, but to draw us to him. God is sanctified when he is trusted by our confidence in him. We declare that we believe he is a holy God, for his holiness is the foundation of his covenant, Ps. lxxxix. 35. Those that fear God,

and those that hope in his mercy, are joined, Ps. cxlvii. 11. At such a time rely upon God for preservation and deliverance. Cast your cares and fears upon him; leave all in his hands; faith glorifies God, Rom. iv. 20.

(5.) To admire his counsels. *Sanctify the Lord*, i. e. praise and magnify him; speak of his glorious outgoings with wonder, especially in your praises fasten upon his *holiness*, as Exod. xv. 11. give him the glory of that attribute, his purity and freedom from sin, giving no countenance to iniquity, pleading a righteous cause, performing his promise. This is sanctifying God; and this must be done with a very awful reverence of that God with whom we have to do; convinced that our praises are no additions to his glory.

(6.) To acquiesce in his disposals. To sanctify God at such a time, is to submit to him without objecting: *Be silent, O all flesh*, Zech. ii. 13. Not disputing against, but silently submitting to, the methods of God's government. We then make him our fear, when we dare not except against any thing that he does: see Hab. ii. 20. It is not for us to prescribe to God, or to arraign the methods he takes, Zeph. i. 7.

Show, II. How this would preserve us from sinful fears of the confederacies of the enemies of the church. To see and be affected with the greatness of God, would help to discover to us,

1. The enemies' pomp eclipsed. Man appears great, till he comes to be compared with God, and then all his glory vanishes as the twinkling of the glow-worm before the noon-day sun. They have then no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth. An awful sight of God in his greatness would dazzle the eyes to all sublunary glory, and then that great pomp which is apt to strike such a terror appears but vain show, Acts xxv. 23.

2. The enemies' power restrained. The more we stand in awe of God the less we shall fear men, because men are but the staff in his hand. God has them in a chain, he has a hook in their nose, Isa. xxxvii. 29. their power is a limited power: see Neh. iv. 14. When we are enlarging the occasions of our fears, and representing them dreadful, then keep up great thoughts of God. Think not so much what enemies can do, as what they *cannot do*, Luke xii. 4, 5. Why shouldst thou be afraid of a man that shall die, Isa. li. 12, 13. Enemies are high, but there is one higher than they are. The more God is sanctified by us, the more we shall be satisfied in God.

*For application.* Let us apply this,

1. To our particular interests, especially the concerns of our souls. It is the sum of all practical religion, to sanctify the name of God, and to make him our fear. Learn this lesson, and put it in practice every day in every thing. Keep up a holy filial fear of God continually; a godly fear. Let this rule you. Maintain an awe of God upon your spirits. Be frequent and serious in holy adorations of God, and let your affections and actions be answerable. Devote yourselves to the fear of God, Ps. cxix. 38. Walk in the fear of the Lord, Acts ix. 31. God is sanctified by the spiritual and holy worship and conversation of those that profess to be near to him. You pray that God's name may be sanctified, act accordingly. God must be sanctified in every prayer, Lev. x. 3. Making God our fear would restrain us from sin, Ps. iv. 4. Neh. v. 15. it would constrain us to duty, 1 Sam. xii. 24. In reference to all your personal affairs, set the Lord still before you. Make God your fear, and you would not be so apt to fear losses, crosses, and the wrath of man.

2. To the public concerns of the church, and to those the occasion of the day does especially call our thoughts. I hope you do concern yourselves in these things. It is not all one to you whether Christ's kingdom and interest sink or prosper. Your hearts are trembling for the ark; are they not? Let not that trembling prevail too far. My errand to you to-day, is to say, Fear not. You hear great talk of the power of France, and their designs against us of this nation, to bring us again into slavery, to re-enthrone popery and tyranny, Isa. vii. 6, &c. Well, *be not afraid of the Assyrian*, Isa. x. 24. *Be strong and courageous*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 7. Though you see others afraid, tell them you know better things, and do not walk in the way of this people.

*Direction* 1. Keep in with God. Fear came in with guilt, Gen. iii. 10. The sinners in Sion are afraid, Isa. xxxiii. 14. afraid where no fear is, Ps. liv. 5. Guilt puts an edge upon our fears. Make your peace with God every day. When foul weather and an evil conscience meet together it goes hard. It is the pardoned upright soul that can look danger in the face without change of countenance, Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16. He that walks uprightly walks with a holy humble confidence, Prov. x. 9.

2. Keep out false reports. If we hearken to every story that is brought us, we shall soon see the ruin of our hopes. The most credulous are the most fearful. It has been the cursed policy of France, by lying stories to propagate fears, and by them to betray the succours that reason offers: compare Neh. vi. 5—13. Those that are naturally fearful, are apt to catch at any thing that will gratify their distemper.

3. Keep down the workings of an unsanctified fancy. When we allow our hearts the liberty of meditating terror, we create bugbears to ourselves, and then frighten ourselves at the view of them; and therefore learn to correct the extravagances of your fancies. Keep thy heart with all diligence.

4. Keep hold of the promise. Do not build your hopes upon the smiles of second causes, but upon the word of promise. Live upon that, even then

:n subsequent events seem to cross it. Against e believe in hope, Rom. iv. 18. that is God's r of trying faith.

. Keep up prayer. Prayer is the great remedy fear. Abide and abound in that duty. Do not ık your praying work is done, when the public k of a fasting day is over. Continue praying the peace of Jerusalem. Let fear strengthen yer, Gen. xxxii. 11. and prayer will weaken fear. e God no rest till he establish, and till he make ısalem a praise in the earth, Isa. lxii. 6, 7.

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## SERMON II.

*Preached July 12th, 1693, on occasion of a Public t.*]

ISAIAH xlii. 21, latter part.

*He will magnify the law, and make it honourable.*

ε whole word of God is of use to direct us in yer; and we have great need of such direction; the truth is, we know not what to pray for as we ht, nor could we expect to succeed, did not the rit in the word, as well as the Spirit in the heart, s help our praying infirmities. But one special : of direction in the word is the promises, from ch we must derive matter for prayer, both in re- ıce to public and personal concerns. Promises not designed to supersede, but to regulate, excite, encourage, prayer: see Ezek. xxxvi. 37. It is d for us to know what to expect. God has in his d told us, not only what he expects from us, but ıt we may expect from him, and to this, faith in yer is to have a regard. As to public affairs, ıld you know what God will do, and conse- ntly what we are to desire, it is this,—*he will ıify the law, and make it honourable.* Some notice he various readings and senses of the words may be unprofitable.

. Some read and understand it as an account of ıt God had done; the favours he had bestowed ın the people of Israel, whom the prophet had n reproving and threatening for their idolatry, ıdness, and obstinacy; an aggravation of which, : the distinguishing kindness of God to them. l thus they read it as setting forth,

l.) The root of that favour. *The Lord was well ıed for his righteousness' sake, i. e.* God had a ject and favour for them, not for the sake of any rit of their own, but for the sake of his own right- sness, *i. e.* his faithfulness to his promise made heir fathers; see Deut. vii. 7, 8. because he would ıove himself a covenant-keeping God. Into this must resolve all the divine favours; all the plea- e God takes in his people, their persons, and their performances, which is otherwise unaccountable. It is *for his righteousness' sake*, for the sake of his goodness and his promise. He is pleased with them because he has said he would be so; loves them, because he said he would love them. Or, for the sake of Christ's righteousness, which is called the righteousness of God. That is the foundation of all our acceptance with God, and therefore of that only we must make mention, Ps. lxxi. 16. Eph. i. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5. God is not well pleased with sinners, but for the sake of some righteousness, something to satisfy divine justice, and to answer the demands of a broken law.

(2.) The fruit of that favour, in what particular instance it appeared, even in giving him the law. Some understand it thus; *The Lord was pleased for the making of him*, i. e. that people, *righteous, to give him a great law, to make him illustrious:*—and so we have

The great design of God in giving him the law; it was to *make him righteous.* Though we cannot be justified by the law, yet we may and must be sanctified by it. The design of the law is to destroy our sins, and to produce in us a conformity to the will and likeness of God.

We are also led to observe the excellency of the law. It is a *great law.* It is full of precepts and rules. It is a law about great things, Hos. viii. 12.—the love of God and our neighbour, the ordinances of worship, the preservation of peace, the reformation of the heart and life: these are great things, no trifling matters. It is a great law, for great things depend upon it,—our everlasting condition. Others take this view of the passage, *God delighted in him for his righteousness' sake, he magnified him with his law, and dignified him.* God did the people of Israel this great honour, to give them his law. Considering whose law, what kind of law, and how given, it was a distinguished honour to them to have it: see Deut. iv. 7, 8. Note, It is a great honour and dignity to have the law. When God would magnify and dignify his people Israel, he gave them his law.

It is an honour to a people to have the law in their books, to have it among them. He has not dealt so with other nations, Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20. This was one of the peculiar privileges of Israel, Rom. iii. 2. Where ordinances are, there the glory dwells, Ps. lxxxv. 9. When they are parted with, the glory is departed, 1 Sam. iv. 22. God promised Abraham to make his name great, and he did it by giving the law to his seed, so making them a peculiar treasure, and a kingdom of priests to himself, Exod. xix. 5, 6. This is the honour of England, that we have Bibles, and have them in a language we understand: see Deut. xxxiii. 2—5.

It is an honour to a person to have the law in his heart. God dignifies a soul when he puts his law into it. The yoke of Christ is an honourable yoke.

The greatest of men need not be ashamed to wear it. The greatest preferment is to be Christ's humble servant. This honour have all his saints, they are magnified and dignified with his law. His secret is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. Take up with nothing short of this honour; be ambitious of this preferment. It is the greatest shame to be without the law of God, as it is the greatest honour to be under the law to Christ. *Receive his law*, with the whole heart.

2. We read it as an account of what God would do for the future. The people of Israel are described, *v.* 20. as a provoking people, and, *v.* 22. as a miserable, oppressed, ruined people. They might think, surely in all this God will be very much a loser; what will become of his honour? Let them leave this to God; *he is well pleased for his righteousness' sake.* Their ruin is the manifestation of his justice and righteousness, therefore he is well pleased; he is comforted in it, Ezek. v. 13. Not for their ruin' sake; for it is no pleasure to the Almighty to afflict, much less to destroy; but for his righteousness' sake; that all the world may observe the impartiality of his justice, Amos iii. 2. And he will be no loser in his glory at last; he *will magnify the law.* If they will not magnify the law by their obedience to it, God will magnify it himself, by punishing them for their disobedience. One way or other, sooner or later, God will have honour, he will be sanctified, Lev. x. 3. This may be understood,

(1.) As the counsel and purpose of God. This is that which he has determined, in which all providences centre.

(2.) As the comfortable expectation of the saints. It may be taken as spoken by the prophet, pleasing himself with the thought, however things go, he will *magnify the law:* this is that in which the Lord is well pleased; and if he be pleased, we have no reason to be displeased.

DOCTRINE. That that which is the purpose and design of God, with which the desires and hopes of all the saints do concur, is some way or other to magnify the law, and to make that honourable.

I. *Explication* 1. By the *law* here, I understand the whole revealed will of God concerning man's duty and happiness; the prohibitions and precepts, with those promises and threatenings which are the sanctions of the law. The law is taken for all the Scripture. It is a law-book. It is given by inspiration of God, as the great Lawgiver. The gospel is called *a law*, Isa. ii. 3. *the law of faith*, Rom. iii. 27. *the law of the spirit of life*, Rom. viii. 2. *the law of liberty*, James ii. 12. and concerning that many understand the text. Look upon the gospel as intended, not only to save us, but in order to that, to rule us. We must *obey* the gospel.

2. By the magnifying of this law, I understand God's doing of that in his providence, which declares and proves the greatness of the law. The law is a great law, but he magnifies it when he makes it to appear great; as God himself, who is infinitely great, is yet said to be magnified, Mal. i. 5. He is said to magnify his word above all his name, Ps. cxxxviii. 2. above all other things by which he has made himself known. He magnifies the authority and truth of the law, its power and efficacy, and its righteousness. The honour of the law is, to be obeyed, to command and direct: when it is so, then he makes it honourable. It is the honour of the law to be clear and plain, to be so reasonable, as to be above dispute or objection. When God's law appears thus, and is accepted and submitted to, then it is made honourable.

3. I say, this is the purpose and design of God. We know not the purposes and designs of God, further than as he is pleased to make them known to us. They are secret in their particular movements, but clear from the word in their general tendency.

(1.) This he will do at last. Shortly he will magnify the law, when he will make it the rule of judgment at the great day. This book shall be opened, Rev. xx. 12. not only the books of men's consciences and God's omniscience, as records of fact, but the books of the Old and New Testaments, as records of law: see Rom. ii. 16. James ii. 12. However now the law is despised by the atheists and profane ones of the world, as an antiquated statute, the day is coming, when it will be magnified in the eyes of all the world, and by it the doom will be passed concerning the eternal state of those that now despise it. The book of the law seems now to be lost with many, they live as if there were no such book, but then it will be found. The great rule of judgment you have in the gospel law: see Mark xvi. 15, 16. These words shall judge us, see John xii. 48. Then this despised gospel will be honourable. When heaven and earth shall be dissolved, this word shall abide, Luke xvi. 17. Matt. xxiv. 35. and then it will appear great. It will then be the honour of this evangelical law, that it will be strictly executed. It cannot be evaded, escaped, contradicted, or charged with injustice, as men's laws often are,—weak, or defective, or unjust, which make them dishonourable. Every sinner's mouth will be stopped with the acknowledgment, and every saint's mouth opened with the admiration, of the equity of the law, and of all the proceedings upon it.

(2.) This he is doing every day. This is the tendency of all events; so I understand the text. He will in the course of his providence magnify the law. Would you resolve the difficulties of providence, and know what God is doing? It is this, he is honouring his law. The great things that God has in store for his church in the latter days, are all summed up in this.

4. With this the desires and hopes of all the saints

cur. This is that which God will do, and this is : which the saints would have done; for the ex-tations of the saints are grounded upon and ded by the word which God has spoken. I come, h Christ;—Come, saith the church, Rev. xxii. 20. that are sanctified and renewed after God's ge, will and refuse as God does. They are *well sed* with that which he is well pleased with. d's glory is the great comfort of God's people. It pecial comfort to ministers that are complaining, he prophet here, that people do not observe what y say, that God will magnify the law for all this, . lv. 10, 11.

I. I would show more particularly, in what in-nces the great God does, and will, magnify the and make it honourable; bring credit to the gos-, 2 Cor. iii. 10, 11. and to the Scriptures.

. In the convincing of gainsayers. When the orance of foolish men is put to silence by the ver of the word, then the law is magnified: see Cor. xiv. 24, 25. Acts vi. 10; xviii. 28. It is si-ced by the plain and powerful efficacy and energy the word. When those that have espoused and up errors against truth, are convinced in their nsciences that they are in the wrong, then the rd is made honourable. Many instances there ve been of this, and more will be, when thousands all be slain, *i. e.* a multitude of prevailing errors, ffled and borne down by the sword, out of the outh of Christ, Rev. xix. 21. When truth gets ound, and error loses, by the plain preaching of e word without secular force, here is the law agnified.

2. In the conversion of souls, and much more of tions, the law is made honourable. When it is ghty, through God, to the pulling down of strong lds, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.—when a great harvest of souls gathered in to Jesus Christ,—when many are turned om darkness to light, Acts xxvi. 18.—when great ners are changed, the strong man armed dispos-ssed,—when the word of God grows and prevails ightily, Acts xix. 20.—when it appears quick and werful, Heb. iv. 12.—then is it magnified. This is ork that God is carrying on in the world, and will hile any of the elect remain uncalled, though some-mes it seems to pause. God has a remnant among ews and Gentiles, he has other sheep that must be ought in, and in this he magnifies the law. We now not what tendency present events may have wards honouring the divine word.

3. In the carrying on of the work of national re-rmation. As far as truth gets ground against error; he purity of ordinances against idolatry, superstition, and corruption in ordinances; and a gospel way f worship is established; so far the law is magnified: he word being the rule of faith, worship, and prac-ce. This is work that God will do, though there be ifficulty in the way of it, and great opposition given to it, and it may seem sometimes to stand still, or to go back. When it is carried on by the powers, and policies, and laws of nations, then the law is magnified. When kings are nursing fathers, the kings of the earth bring their glory and honour to the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 24. When it is carried on by unlikely instruments, as by Luther, in Germany, and here in England, by Edward VI. and queen Elizabeth. Not by might nor by power, Zech. iv. 6, 7. Here is the law magnified. The more of God the less of man.

4. In the composing of the divisions and breaches of his churches. Nothing does more reflect upon the law of Christ, and make it dishonourable, than the divisions that are among Christians. God will find out some way or other for healing; he will pour oil into these wounds, Isa. xi. 6, 13. they all shall be one; and that will magnify the law, and retrieve the credit of Christianity. As far as formality, and bigotry, and imposition go out of request, so far there is a direct tendency towards this healing work. He has said it, and he will do it, that the Lord shall be one, and his name one, Zech. xiv. 9. There shall be one heart, Jer. xxxii. 39. Ezek. xi. 19. It must be done by the law of love, which will thus be magnified, not by compulsion.

5. In the correcting of his own people when they offend him. This God will do for the honour of his law, lest it should savour of partiality. Those that are near to him, must not go altogether unpunished. Judgment begins at the house of God, 1 Pet. iv. 17. The tokens of God's displeasure against those that profess relation to him, make the word honourable. Never was the law so magnified, as it was in the death of Christ: see Numb. xiv. 20, 21.

6. In the confounding of all his implacable enemies. The man of sin is to be consumed by the breath of Christ's mouth, *i. e.* the preaching of the gospel, 2 Thess. ii. 8. When the everlasting gospel is preached, Rev. xiv. 6. presently Babylon is fallen, is fallen, *v.* 8. This is for the honour of the law; when the walls of Jericho are thrown down with the sound of rams' horns, and the Midianites defeated with lamps and earthen pitchers. This God will do: the law shall be honoured with the victory, over all those that fight against it and oppose it; it will be a burthensome stone, as the ark to the Philistines.

7. In the comforting of all the Lord's people under their greatest trials. The law of Christ has been, and will be, greatly honoured by these experiences of the saints, Ps. cxix. 54, 92. This has borne them up under great sufferings, has been their stay, their cordial, their song, and it will be so more and more. God will magnify the law, by bringing his people to rest themselves upon that, to seek their comforts and hopes from the Scriptures.

8. In the concurrence of all events to the fulfilling of the Scripture, especially the prophecies and pro-

mises that relate to the state of the church in the latter days. This will be to the honour of the Scriptures, that no word there shall fall to the ground. Providence is the transcript of the word; as we have heard, so have we seen, Ps. xlviii. 8. God will make good every word that he has spoken, he will be known by his name Jehovah. David has it often, Ps. cxix. *According to thy word.* All that God does is that the Scriptures may be fulfilled.

*Use* 1. If this be so, that God will magnify the law and make it honourable, then what are we to think will become of those that vilify the law, and make it contemptible?

(1.) In doctrine: as the papists, that set up another guide, another rule, in opposition to it. They vilify the law by making its authority to depend upon the authority of the church, without which, they will tell you, they regard it no more that Æsop's fables. They set up human traditions to be received with equal veneration. The very soul of popery consists in a vilifying of the Scriptures.

(2.) In practice. Those careless and profane persons, by whom the great things of the law are counted as a strange thing, that slight their Bibles, despise the commandment of the Lord. The language of every wilful sin is against the law, 2 Sam. xii. 9. They who speak contemptuously of prayer, Job xxi. 14, 15. and of the table of the Lord, Mal. i. 12—14. despise his word. The world is full of atheism. Religion is made a matter of ridicule, and the professors of it are trampled upon with the greatest scorn, Lam. iv. 2. Those that do thus you see are walking contrary to God, Lev. xxvi. 21. fighting against God, Acts v. 39. You may read what they are doing, Ps. ii. 1—3. and you may see there what will become of them.

They will be defeated. It is a vain thing, *v.* 1. God shall laugh at them, *v.* 4. It is to no purpose to vilify that which God will magnify, for sooner or later God will bring all the world to be of his mind. The truth is great, and it will prevail.

They will be destroyed if they continue in it. He will speak to them in wrath, *v.* 5. The attempt will be to their own ruin. They shall be lightly esteemed, 1 Sam. ii. 30. They shall have their faces filled with everlasting shame and contempt, Dan. xii. 2. 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.

2. If this be so, it speaks comfort and encouragement in reference to public affairs. This is good news to all the Lord's people, that God will magnify the law. Let us believe this word,

(1.) When we are grieved at the abounding of sin, and the great contempt of God's law. All that love the law cannot but be so, Ps. cxix. 53, 136, 158. It is comfortable to think, that for all this God will magnify it, whether you and I live to see it or no. I do not doubt but the Scriptures will be more in credit than they now are; and then the wickedness of the wicked will come to an end. Those that side with the law are certainly on that side that will prevail at last, in spite of all opposition. Who shall live when God doth this?

(2.) When we are perplexed with dark and intricate providences, wheels within wheels, sometimes moving backward, we know not what to make of things, and are perfectly at a loss what God is about to do with us. Let this comfort us, that all these events are tending towards the magnifying of the law. The Scripture is in a course of fulfilment, the kingdom of Christ is in its establishment, and his conquests in their progress, Rev. vi. 2. When the mystery of God shall be finished, we shall see an agreement between the providence and the prophecy: see Rev. x. 7. The remembrance of the security of the church of God, may comfort his people while reflecting upon the power and malice of their foes, Isa. xiv. 32.

(3.) When our expectations are disappointed, as to temporal deliverances, we may be satisfied that God will magnify the law and make that honourable; and then it is no matter what becomes of us, though we be trampled upon, and be as nothing; see Isa. xxx. 20, 21. The glory of God, and the honour of his law, should be preferred before any other concern whatsoever: see Zeph. iii, 12, 13. God is magnifying the law by this; teaching us to magnify that more, and other guides and confidences less. God will be sanctified in those that are about him.

3. Let us endeavour as far as we can to magnify the law, and to make it honourable; let us concur with God in this good design.

(1.) Put a high esteem upon the law of God. Place it among your chief privileges. Esteem it more than riches, Ps. cxix. 72. than pleasure, Ps. xix. 10. than necessary food, Job xxiii. 12. Buy the truth; part with any thing for it. King Edward VI. would not tread upon a Bible. Know whose law it is, and what kind of law, Rom. vii. 12, 14. Do not think meanly of the Scripture, or of any part of it.

(2.) Attend to the reading and hearing of it, with all reverence and readiness of mind. Look upon the Scripture as no ordinary book; receive it as the word of God, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Acts x. 34. What saith my Lord unto his servant? Speak, for thy servant hears. Make it to appear that you do indeed magnify the law; not sleeping, gazing, or whispering while it is preached. See how reverently the law was to be received, Exod. xix. 10, 12.

(3.) Let the law of God have a place in you, the innermost and the uppermost place. The greatest honour you can do the law, is to let it dwell in you richly, Col. iii. 16. Get it written in your hearts. Set it as a seal there. Hide it there, Ps. cxix. 11. in your understandings, memories, and affections. Love it dearly; meditate in it, Ps. i. 3.

.) Let all your words and actions be kept in a
stant conformity to the law of God. Be ruled
t in every thing. Let the law of God command
r thoughts, your tongues, your time, and your
te. Make it your counsellor, and your com-
ıder.

.) Do what you can to advance the credit of the
with others. Aim at this in your respective
es in your families, and among your neigh-
rs. Take all occasions to speak in honour of the
ptures. Bear your testimony against sin, and
serious godliness. Lead others to love the law
God.

.) Since we can do but little towards the magni-
g the law, let us be earnest with God in prayer,
he will do it himself. It is the scope of the first
e petitions of the Lord's prayer. He can make
law honourable, and he will do it. Father, glo-
thy name, is an answered prayer, John xii. 28.

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## SERMON III.

*Preached June* 10, 1702, *on occasion of the Public
t upon the declaration of war against France and
in.*]

### Jeremiah xiv. 7.

*Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou
it for thy name's sake.*

e prophet is here praying for those against whom
prophesied, and yet not guilty of any inconsist-
y with himself. As God's messenger he prophe-
l against them, but as their friend he interceded
them. Thus God himself reveals his wrath
inst all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,
l yet has no pleasure in the death of sinners.
l had told him before, it was to no purpose to
y for them, *ch.* vii. 16; xi. 14. The decree was
e forth. And yet he does pray for them; not in dis-
dience to God, for that, though expressed as a
hibition, was only intended to show the deplora-
ness of their case; that they by their sins had
h *forfeited* their interest in his prayers, and did
wise *defeat* the success of them. But Moses in-
eded for Israel, even after God had said *Let me
e*, Exod. xxxii. 10, 11. The case of a people is
y sad, when the prayers of God's prophets for
m are restrained. But as he continued to pro-
sy to them, who would not hear him speaking
m God to them, so he continued to pray for them,
o by their sins hindered the success of his speak-
to God for them. Thus he made good two of his
cals which he had occasion afterwards to make;
, *ch.* xvii. 16. *Neither have I desired the woful
l*; the other, *ch.* xviii. 20. *I stood before thee to
speak good for them.* This prayer has reference to a double distress, which the people were now in; two of God's sore judgments were with them.

1. They were engaged in a war with a potent enemy, so that abroad in the field the *sword devoured*, *v.* 18.

2. They were threatened with famine, *v.* 1. God had withheld the rain from them. With this also God has threatened us; but his remembering mercy in the midst of wrath in this matter, is an encouragement to us to hope that, in the other, he will not deal with us as our sins have deserved. In the midst of the melancholy description of the judgment, he thus turns to God: and well it is for us that we have a God to go to in every exigence. In the text here is,

1. A penitent confession of sin, *Our iniquities testify against us*; *i. e.* they come in as undeniable evidence against us, which we cannot gainsay. The matter is plain, for *our backslidings are many* and plain. He includes the iniquities of their ancestors, *v.* 20. *though it* be so; intimating that this was a thing that made against them, and that discouraged their prayers and hopes.

2. A pleading prayer for mercy, *Do thou it*, even that of which we have need; that for which we are waiting upon thee. Lord, *do thou it for thy name's sake.* This reaches both the designs of the appointment of this fast, which is, to *humble ourselves for our sins*, and to implore *God's blessing on our arms*, *&c.* And I would willingly speak what is apposite, not only to the work, but to the whole work, of the day, in its day.

I. I shall observe some things from the text,

1. For our assistance in repentance and humiliation. This is the first work in our conversion to God, and ought to be our daily work in our walking with God. The life of a Christian ought to be a life of repentance, as well as a life of faith; for the best saints, while in this world, must own themselves sinners. Here is a concise confession, *Our iniquities testify against us.* The prophet puts himself into the number, being one of them: and who can say, I have contributed nothing to national guilt? when we know we have all sinned.

Doctrine. True penitents see their iniquities testifying against them. Our sins are witnesses against us.

1. They *testify*, for they are plain and evident; what they say against us is not whispered in a corner, but is *testified*; not found *by secret search*, Jer. ii. 34. but graven upon the horns of our altars, Jer. xvii. 1. Sin has a voice crying in God's ears, and testifies what it has to say. Conscience, by which it gives in its evidence, is instead of a thousand witnesses; hence we read of the testimony of conscience.

2. They testify *against us*, as a witness against a man in a cause. Our sins are witnesses against us

in many cases. Sin is *against us*, as well as God. Every sin in the guilt of it is *Satan*, an adversary to us. It is called in as a witness, to *answer* against us, to disprove and overthrow our pleas.

(1.) If we boast of ourselves and our own excellences, our *iniquities testify against us*. They are witnesses against our pride and self-conceitedness, and disprove the high opinion we are apt to have of ourselves, and lay us low. Conviction of sin does for ever exclude boasting. Do we value ourselves upon our wisdom? Our iniquities are evidence against us, and prove us fools. Never let the wise man glory in his wisdom for the world, since the wisest know how foolishly they have done for their own souls. Are we proud of parentage or clothes? Our sins prove us vile in our birth, and naked to our shame, Rev. iii. 17. This is a humbling testimony against us—what have we to be proud of, that are convicted lepers, and convicted rebels?

(2.) If we trust to our own righteousness, and insist upon innocency as our plea, our iniquities testify against us. If we plead Not guilty, and say we have not sinned, behold clouds of witnesses appear against us, and confront us. Does not thy own heart know that *thou art the man?* Is not the matter of fact plain against thee? see Jer. ii. 23, 25. Hence sin is said to be set in order, Ps. l. 21. as witnesses set in order before the prisoner.

(3.) If we build our hopes for heaven upon our privileges and performances, our iniquities testify against us. Do we claim heaven as a debt? Our sins show the vanity of our claim, for they are a forfeiture for which none of our good works can atone, or take away. Our iniquities are as the cherubim with the flaming sword, Hos. vii. 1. Our sins are as a partition-wall, and keep good things from us. Do you cry, The temple of the Lord? What means then our disobedience?

(4.) If we quarrel with God, as dealing unjustly or unkindly with us in our afflictions, our iniquities will testify against us, and will witness to our face, that we deserve what is laid upon us, and a thousand times more. These are witnesses that *justify God* in all that is brought upon us, and prove that he has done right, Neh. ix. 33. If we accuse God, these are witnesses that will answer us, and will tell us we are punished less than our iniquities deserve.

*Inference* 1. If our iniquities testify against us, let us then by true repentance testify against them, and against ourselves because of them. This becomes us upon a fast day, to judge and condemn ourselves; to take shame to ourselves; and own that we are no more worthy to be called God's children.

2. Let us fly to Christ and the Spirit to testify for us. Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me. The blood of Christ speaks for us as our sins speak against us, and it speaks better things than that of Abel: this purges and pacifies the conscience. Christ is an advocate against the accusations of sin, to take off the force of the evidence; the Spirit is a witness for us, a witness in us.—I shall observe some things,

2. For our assistance in prayer and supplication. *Though* our sins testify against us, yet we are encouraged and imboldened to pray, Ps. lxv. 3. Though we have provoked thee to do nothing for us, but all against us, *yet do thou it;* give the mercies for which we are waiting upon thee. We are here taught,

(1.) To refer ourselves to God in prayer; *Do thou it, i. e.* do with us as thou thinkest fit. It is not fit for us to prescribe to infinite wisdom and sovereignty, but as David, *Here I am*, 2 Sam. xv. 25. Do thou *it*, methinks, is like that, Isa. xlvi. 4. *I am he.* Not, Do thou it in this way, at this time, by this instrument; but, Do thou it: see Judg. x. 15.

(2.) To take our encouragement in prayer from God only—For *thy name's sake.* God's name is all that by which he has made himself known. And we know him by his name, not by his nature. We have leave to plead, and this is the best plea—Not *for our sake.*

Doctrine. In pleading with God for mercy, the best plea is, for his name's sake. This is urged not to move God, but to encourage ourselves and one another. This plea is insisted on, *v.* 21.

Do thou that which will be most for thy glory: do as thou seest will tend most to thy own honour; or

Do this For thine own glory's sake. But what is this name of God which we may insist upon?

1. For thy mercy's sake; for when God would proclaim his name, by that attribute he proclaimed it, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. We have no merit of our own, or our land's, to plead, but it will be for the glory of thy mercy to save by prerogative. God's reasons of favour are fetched from within himself, Hos. ii. 14.

2. For thy promise' sake: see *v.* 21. *Do not break thy covenant.* God has given us his word, on which he has caused us to hope, and as far as the promise goes, our faith and prayer may go. This may be pleaded as to personal and public mercies, the word on which he has caused us to hope, Ps. cxix. 49. See 2 Chron. xx. 9.

3. For thy interest's sake in the world. The honour of his name is the great concern he has upon earth. Do it to prevent the reproaches of the enemy, that will reflect on thy name: see Exod. xxxii. 12. Num. xiv. 13. Deut. xxxii. 27. Joshua vii. 9.—to promote thy kingdom, and that thou mayst be attended with the praises of Israel.

4. For thy Son's sake. In him especially he has made himself known, and we are to pray for his name's sake, the sake of the Anointed, Ps. lxxxiv. 9. Dan. ix. 17.

II. I shall endeavour to apply the text to our work this day, and the occasion of this solemnity,—*Though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake.*

Show, 1. What it is we would have done. What is it for which we come together this day? I hope we do not cry, as froward children, for we know not what: we should have a clear and distinct knowledge of the mercies we ask.—*Do thou it.* What would we have God to do? We must not come to him with covetous and ambitious prayers, nor have we any warrant to pray that our land may be the head of a universal monarchy, and all kings and nations be tributaries. When the Most High separated the sons of Adam, he designed no other universal monarchy but his own. Nor do we come with cruel and revengeful prayers: we do not say, Do thou make the nations that are against us fields of blood and ruinous heaps. We wish not the misery of any part of mankind, nor hurt to any man. But what then?

(1.) We pray that the just rights of nations may be vindicated and maintained. In these things our eyes are to God as the *King of nations*, the God that doth righteously. Do thou this, appear against the bold and threatening power which transcribes the measures of the king of Babylon, Isa. xiv. 16, 17. The sword is drawn in Europe for the securing of the ancient landmarks, and the preventing of further encroachments; for the enslaving of nations has a manifest tendency to the ruin of religion and virtue. Lord, do this.

(2.) We pray that the suffering churches abroad may be delivered; for they are our brethren, that join with us in protestations against popery, and suffer for doing so. Lord, let not the rod lie always upon them, nor the enemy insult for ever. Though this be not the ground of the war, yet if God give success, we would hope this might be one good effect of it, and that it would strengthen the protestant interest.

(3.) We pray for the peace, safety, and prosperity of our own land. We engage in a war abroad to prevent the bringing of it into our own borders. *Do thou it*, give success to our forces abroad, and be a guard upon our own land. This must be God's doing, or it will not be done. Fleets and armies, statesmen and counsellors, generals and admirals, are what he makes them, Ps. cxxvii. 1. Unless God take our part, and come into the alliance, we can expect no success.

(4.) We pray for the flourishing of true religion and godliness among us, by the suppression of vice and profaneness, the preservation of liberty, the abounding of ministers, for our unity and strength, victory over atheism, error, and all other evils.

(5.) We pray for the entail of the gospel, and the peaceable enjoyment thereof, upon our posterity after us. What benefit we enjoy by our predecessors contracts a debt to our successors. What is committed to us we should transmit to them, as a treasure. *Lord, do thou this*; thy mercy is from generation to generation, let this fruit of thy mercy be so too. This is one of the cares of the present day,—to preserve the succession in the protestant line; for we have found the danger of a popish prince. Lord, do thou these things, in thine own way.

Show, 2. What is our great discouragement as to these things,—that *our iniquities testify against us.* This is the great discouragement—we are a sinful people. This is a day proper for the searching out of the accursed thing in our camp; the matter is plain.

(1.) We feel the effects of our iniquities; the Lord's voice would not cry to us as it doth, if the voice of our sins did not cry to him. God has begun a controversy with us in the death of the king, now, when the nation stood in need of the most accomplished martial conduct. We are not healed, not eased, not settled without fear. Our anger one towards another is the fruit of God's anger against us all. Sin makes the breach.

(2.) We see the evidences of our iniquities. They are too plain to be hid, too many and gross to be hid under the mantle of charity itself, Isa. i. 4. Jer. v. 31. Three sorts of iniquities testify against us.

[1.] The boldness of the atheists and unbelievers. This is an iniquity that testifies against us, and goes barefaced. Open defiance of God and religion; the Scriptures and sacred things ridiculed; the truths of God contradicted and exposed to contempt. How many are there in our age, in our land, of the scoffers of the latter days, 2 Pet. iii. 3. Though, thanks be to God, wholesome provision is made for the preserving of the honour of religion by some laws in the last glorious reign, yet who concern themselves to punish the dishonours done to God's name, as they do to be revenged for the indignities done to their own names.

[2.] The debaucheries of the profane. These are iniquities that testify against us, though the national testimonies borne against vice, both in this and the last reign, I would hope, lessen the guilt as national, yet they aggravate it as popular. It is an evidence men hate to be reformed. Drunkenness still abounds, Isa. xxviii. 8. and still it passes for an honour, which is the shame of men and Christians, to be mighty to drink wine. The arts of propagating vice are improved, uncleanness, swearing, sabbath-breaking: because of these the land mourns. They shame and threaten us.

[3.] The declinings, and divisions, and disagreeable walkings of those that profess religion. I mean not those of any particular party; but such as run not with the profane to an excess of riot, even they, are wretchedly degenerated from the pious zeal and strictness of their predecessors. Their love waxeth cold, and their differences are mismanaged. Diversity of apprehensions causeth alienation of affections, and we do not see that disposition to union and accommodation that we could wish; the breach is yet wide as the sea. The worldliness and

pride of professors, their private feuds and quarrels, are too apparent; and that which aggravates these sins is, that the light of the gospel still shines so clearly, and we have great peace and liberty. God has done much for us, but we have been unthankful and ungrateful, murmuring and distrustful. And now what may we expect? Shall not God visit for these things, saith the Lord? Jer. v. 29. Shall not a camp be troubled in which there are so many *Achans?* May we not expect the execution of that fearful doom, Isa. v. 5, 6. I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up: and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. And may we not fear that God should swear in his wrath that we should never enter into Canaan. I am not for propagating fears and jealousies, but repentance. Our iniquities are the most threatening symptoms, and give us the greatest cause to fear.

Show, 3. What encouragement we have as to these things,—*for thy name's sake.* If any thing be done to purpose, for our land, it must be the Lord's doing. The queen has declared that she puts her trust in Almighty God for success; and that way we must look. It is not the strength of our navy, the extent of our alliances, the prudence of our statesmen, or the valour of our generals, upon which we can depend. An arm of flesh is but a broken reed. We relied much upon the king, while we had him to fight our battles, and God would show us our folly in thinking all bound up in the life of a man. We hope God will *do it*, at least do *something* for us, grant us *some* deliverance, 2 Chron. xii. 7. that he will not abandon us quite to ruin, *for his name's sake.*

(1.) Because it will be an opportunity of magnifying himself, and his own wisdom, power, and goodness. When proud tyrants, that have been the terror of the mighty, are humbled and brought down, and the poor raised out of the dust; when great things are brought to pass by unlikely instruments, God is the more glorified. When the earth helps the woman, and the sons of the alien become ploughmen and vinedressers to the church, as is promised, Isa. lxi. 5. this is much for the glory of God's name.

(2.) Because the concerns of his gospel and kingdom among men, are so nearly interested in our affairs. We may plead for his name's sake, for we have the true religion on our side, and our share of the war is very much upon the score of religion. It is to support popery that the Prince of Wales is set up; it is to support the protestant religion that the succession is settled as it is: and this is a thing in which God's glory is concerned, as well as our comfort. We may plead as Isa. lxiii. 19. and 2 Chron. xiii. 8, 9, &c. It will be for the honour of God's name, if religion flourish at home and extend abroad; if the bulwarks of it be fortified, and the entail of it corroborated. But will it be for God's glory, that Satan's seat should again be erected there where Christ has had his throne? We may be sure that God will glorify his own name, John xii. 28. will be true to his own honour, and not give his glory to another.

(3.) Because God has done great things for us, and we may take encouragement from his works, which are a part of his name, Ps. lxxv. 1. God did for his own name's sake bring about the Revolution: keep our head above water through the last war, and ended it not to our disadvantage. The Lord has now of late done great things for us in the beginning of this reign. Our land is still peaceable at home, and considerable abroad. Our liberties continued, and many other benefits yet with us.

(4.) Because we call upon his name. Though we cannot say, Do it for our prayer's sake, yet we may say, Do it for that name's sake which we call upon in our prayers and praises. God manifestly gave answer to the prayers of the last fast day, in the unanimous resolves of the parliament for the public good, and the preventing of the heats that were feared, and the guiding of the counsels upon the death of the king.

Show, 4. What is our duty upon the whole matter. Now we have prayed that God will *do it*, what must we do?

(1.) Let us be daily earnest with God in prayer, for the peace of our English Jerusalem, and the prosperity of our brethren abroad. Would you approve yourselves true friends to the queen and nation, preserve and improve your interest at the throne of grace. *Cry day and night*, Luke xviii. 7.

(2.) Let us patiently bear the inconveniences of the war we are engaged in. It is a calamity, but much less than we have deserved, and necessary to prevent a greater calamity. Better be taxed than plundered by the sword of war, or our estates confiscated by the sword of persecution.—It is a hinderance to trade; those that have effects at sea, have now more need than ever to live by faith, that they may bear losses with an even mind, and lay up treasure above.

(3.) Let us every one take heed of sin, and reform our own hearts, lives, and families. It is but a mock fast, if it be not like *Nineveh's*, Jonah iii. 8. Now we have special dependence upon God, we should take special care to please him, Deut. xxiii. 9. Keep from sin, which is God's enemy.

(4.) Let us prepare for troubles, and get ready for the worst. What God may yet do with us we know not; he can secure his own name, and yet make us a desolation, Heb. xi. 17.

(5.) Let us encourage ourselves and one another in God, when we hear evil tidings.

## SERMON IV.

[*Preached May 26th, 1703, on occasion of the National Fast, for success in the war with France and Spain.*]

MARK xiii. 7.

*And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled.*

By this word of Christ we are both forewarned and forearmed; for what he here says to those who were then his disciples, he says to all, *v.* 37. he says to us, for our learning.

I. We are here forewarned to expect trouble, *Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars;* and it follows, *such things must needs be;* look for no other. Is not our life a warfare?

1. This points immediately at those wars which wrought on the final ruin and overthrow of the Jewish church and nation. The struggles that were between the conquerors and the conquered. The Jews resolute in their resistance, and the Romans in their conquests. This occasioned many bloody battles, and a long war for several years. Josephus's History of the Wars of the Jews largely relates the fulfilling of these prophecies. Never was there such desolation. At the same time the Romans were at war with other nations.

2. It looks further, and is intended as an intimation to us all, and to all Christians, to count upon trouble in this world; particularly to expect that in every age, more or less, there will *be wars and rumours of wars:* see *v.* 8. *nation rising against nation.* When ye *hear wars,* (so the word is,) when ye hear war at home, the noise of it, for war in a country makes a noise; never more than since the invention of guns, the most noisy way of fighting; yet of old they complained of the *noise of war,* Nahum iii. 2. Exod. xxxii. 17, 18. Some alive have heard much of this noise in our own land; not nation against nation, but neighbour against neighbour. But blessed be God, it is not our case at this day; we hear not the noise of foreign invasion or domestic insurrections.

When ye *hear the rumours of wars,* the reports or tidings of wars. We commonly call uncertain reports *rumours,* and in time of war we often hear much, but the original word signifies intelligences, that of which we hear.

DOCTRINE. That though it be very sad, yet it is not at all strange in this world, to hear of wars and rumours of wars. There are three sorts of wars:

1. Law-wars among neighbours and relations, bad enough, and very common, through too much love of the world, and too little of our brother. While there is so much folly and covetousness, so much envy and malice, among neighbours, no marvel if there be strife. There are few of the spirit of Abram, Gen. xiii. 8. We hear much of these contests; would to God we heard less! for there is utterly a fault among men, 1 Cor. vi. 7.

2. Book-wars among scholars and Christians. Different sentiments maintained by each side with great heat, too often greater than the occasion demands. We must not by these be shaken in mind. Such things must be. They are needful sometimes in defence of plain truths, and for the discovery of doubtful and controverted ones.

3. Sword-wars among nations and public interests: of these the text speaks. The first war we read of was, Gen. xiv. though probably Nimrod the mighty hunter was a soldier. As to these, we have reason upon some accounts to think it strange. Whence is it that so much mischief should be done in the world by wars? considering,

(1.) What principles there are in the nature of man. Is there not such a thing as humanity? One would wonder that ever the wit of man should be employed to invent instruments of cruelty and death; that men should be so *prodigal* of their own blood, and so *covetous* of the blood of their brethren. Man is not born for war, but naked and unarmed; not fierce, as birds and beasts of prey.

(2.) What promises there are in the word of God. It seems hard to reconcile this text with Isa. ii. 4. and with Isa. xi. 6, &c. The Jews object it. Christ himself has said otherwise, Luke xii. 51. and in the text. How shall we reconcile these two? I reply,

Those promises are in part fulfilled already. Christ was born at a time of general peace. The gospel has prevailed much to the civilizing of the nations, and as far as it is received, it disposes men to peace. The primitive Christians were of a peaceable disposition.

They will have a more full accomplishment in the latter days. Though contrary events come between, that word shall not fall to the ground.

Yet the commonness of war in every age takes off the strangeness of it. It is what we must expect in our day. A few years ago we had peace proclaimed, but war again quickly; and that crown which was then the mediator of the peace, was first itself engaged in another war. What do we hear of at this day so much as of wars? Several countries are the seats of war; cities are besieged and fields overspread with armies. Now this we are not to think strange,

Because men are so provoking to God, and he does thus in a way of righteous judgment punish them for their sins. It is the sword of the Lord bathed in heaven, that lays waste on earth, Isa. xxxiv. 5. War is one of God's sore judgments, with which he corrects the people of his wrath, Ezek. xiv. 17, 21. Sometimes God thus makes wicked men a scourge one to another, as Nebuchadnezzar was to the nations. Sometimes a scourge to

his own people, Isa. x. 6. It is sin that draws the sword, removes the defence, and sheds blood. The Lord has given the sword a charge, Jer. xlvii. 6, 7. Ezek. v. 2. But let us not judge uncharitably of those nations that are the seat of war, as if we were better than they: are there not with us, even with us, sins?

Because men are so provoking one to another, and they do thus give way to their own lusts, James iv. 1, 2. No war carried on but there is certainly a great deal of sin on both sides, as 2 Chron. xxviii. 9. But as to the cause of war,

1. Sometimes men's lusts on both sides begin the war, and where there may be a right and colour of reason on both sides, yet not such as on either to justify the taking up of arms, and while there are such follies set in great dignity, Eccl. x. 6. no marvel if we hear much of wars; punctilios of honour, inconsiderable branches of right, to which lives and countries are sacrificed by jealous princes; the mouth justly opened to denounce war, but the ear unjustly deaf to the proposals of peace.

2. Where the war on the one side is just and necessary, it is men's lusts on the other side that make it so. And if we see it, we need not marvel at the matter. Here is the original of war and bloodshed.

(1.) Men's pride and ambition sometimes make a war just and necessary. By pride comes contention, Prov. xiii. 10. He that said, I will be like the Most High, was the man that made the earth to tremble, Isa. xiv. 13, 16. Proud and haughty men, that aim at a universal monarchy, that will set up and depose at their pleasure, entail war upon the nations. Every sheaf must bow to theirs; either bend or break. Did men know themselves to be but men, they would not think themselves gods, and prove themselves beasts.

(2.) Men's covetousness and injustice sometimes make a war just and necessary. It is not strange to hear of wars, when there are those that would be placed alone in the midst of the earth, Isa. v. 8. and would command the territories and treasures of all their neighbours. This is a provocation not to be borne: see Hab. ii. 5—8. 1 Kings xx. 3, &c. The injured rights of nations must be asserted, &c.

(3.) Men's treachery sometimes makes war. No marvel we hear of wars, when *all men are liars*, and no confidence is to be put in them. When the public faith of princes and nations is pawned in vain, and the most sacred cords broken, like Samson's bands, only because a man thinks himself a Samson for strength. This is one thing that justifies our national engagement at this day. War is an appeal to God's providence against those who would not stand to an appeal to his ordinance, see Ezek. xvii. 18, 19. It is a quarrel God will avenge.

(4.) Oppression and persecution sometimes make war just. In this case sometimes the law of nations comes in for a timely and seasonable relief, as in our own land in the late happy revolution, on the foundation of which the present government stands, in which we are so happy. However, in the last extremity the very law of nature helps, as in the case of our brethren in France, the province of Languedoc, last and least enslaved. However, if Nebuchadnezzar be driven from among men, must men be a prey to him? Christianity teaches patient suffering, but the God of grace is the God of nature. Since the empire became Christian, perhaps the case is altered. The infraction of civil edicts is a disease which may be remedied by a method of cure of the same nature. We know what oppression does, Eccl. vii. 7. Thank God that we are not in their temptation, and pray to God that we never may, lest the remedy be worse than the disease.

II. We are here forearmed against the trouble we are bid to expect.

When you are yourselves disturbed with the alarms of war, *be not troubled*, i. e. be not inordinately dejected and cast down, be not terrified, whatever happens; keep trouble from your heart, John xiv. 1. if war come to your door.—When you hear of war abroad, hear of war proclaimed, hear of war pushed on, hear of the direful effects of war, hear of sieges and battles, marches and countermarches, famine and plunder, cities burnt, and countries laid waste; in the midst of all, *be not ye troubled*. It is both for caution and comfort. You need not be troubled, therefore give not way to it.

Doctrine. That the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ ought not to be inordinately troubled, when there are wars and rumours of wars.

1. As for others, they have reason to be *troubled*. Those that are not the disciples of Jesus Christ, and are not interested in his merit and grace, have cause for trouble when God's judgments are abroad: see Isa. xxxiii. 14. Terrors belong to them, and as for comforts, they have no part nor lot in the matter, see Luke xxi. 25, 26. Those that have the most cause to be troubled commonly put trouble furthest from them. Have not they reason to be troubled that lie under the guilt of all their sins, and the wrath and curse of an angry God, to whom the sword is like that flaming sword, Gen. iii. 24. As men are, so God's judgments are to them, 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13. To such these are indeed but the beginning of sorrows.

2. There is cause for the disciples of Christ themselves, upon some accounts, and in some degree, to be *troubled*. Christ would not have his followers to be without feeling. God calls to mourning at such a time. This is a doctrine that needs explication and limitation. When you hear of wars *be ye troubled* after a godly sort. There is a threefold *trouble* commendable:

(1.) Sympathy with the sufferers. Even the guilty

de partake of the same nature. Much more should e sympathize with the innocent countries that are e seat of war, and the righteous undertakers of a st and honourable cause. Feel for their griefs that e exposed to spoil, and hear the voice of the op-essor, and that have their lives jeoparded in the gh places of the field. Think of the sufferings of isoners, and the alarms of besieged cities;—these ifferers are our bone and our flesh.

(2.) Sorrow for sin. It is sin that makes all the ischief. Mourn for the sin that is the cause of the ar, and the sin that is the effect of it. How is God ishonoured! how are arts of sin taught and propa-ated! It should trouble us to think of the wicked-ess of the wicked; it is a thing for which horror ould *take hold on us*, Ps. cxix. 53.

(3.) Solicitude for the ark of God. For this our earts should tremble, lest religion in its various in-rests suffer damage; lest the protestant religion e weakened, and antichristian powers be strength-ned. We should be concerned, as Eli was, 1 Sam. v. 13. The desolations of the sanctuary should ouble us more than the desolations of the earth: is is a holy fear.

3. Christians ought not to be inordinately troubled. When ye hear this, *be not troubled, i. e.*

(1.) Be not disquieted, but make the best of it. It not our wisdom to aggravate to ourselves the causes f trouble, nor to make them worse than they are. our Saviour has here told us, such things must be; ere is no remedy. God is doing his own work in ll events. Thus it was before we were born, Eccl. ii. 10. and so it will be. Let us not magnify the vents of our own time, as if there never were the ke; there is nothing new under the sun. The his-ories of former times make our own less formidable.

(2.) Be not affrighted, but hope the best from it. When we hear the rumours of war, we must not be f doubtful mind; not as Ahaz, Isa. vii. 2; viii. 11, 2. We must not give up all for lost upon every isaster and disappointment. When rumours of ars are abroad, we have great need to watch against he prevailing fear of evil tidings, and to keep the eart fixed. Courage is an excellent virtue in time f war, and needful at home as well as abroad. Make ot your brethren's heart to fail as your heart, Deut. x. 3.

(3.) Be not amazed, but prepare for worse after it. There seems to be this also intended in the caution; ompare *v.* 8. *these are the beginnings of sorrows*. Be ot troubled for this, but rather arm yourselves with Christian courage and patience against the assault f the next trouble. Weep not for this, but get ready or the next, Luke xxiii. 28, 29. Faint not in these esser conflicts, for then what will you do when greater come: see Jer. xii. 5. Several considerations will be of use to keep trouble from the heart of good Christians, when we hear of wars.

[1.] The righteous God sits in the throne judging right, therefore *be not troubled*. War is an appeal to him, and he will determine those appeals in justice, and execute the determinations by an overruling power, Ps. ix. 7, 8; xcvii. 1; xcviii. 9. God is King of nations, and presides in the affairs of nations. He has not only a negative voice, but a guiding hand, in councils of war, and treaties of peace. Men talk of the fortune of war, but it is not a blind fortune, the issue is determined by a wise God. If it be doubtful to us on which side the right lies, it is not so to God. Leave it to him, therefore, to govern the world.

[2.] The church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, therefore *be not troubled*. We must be concerned for the church, but we have this to comfort us, God has espoused the cause of his church, and will plead it with jealousy. Whatever revolutions there are in the nations, God will secure the interests of his own church and people, Matt. xvi. 18. The Lord has founded Sion, Isa. xiv. 32. Christ will have a church, a kingdom in the world in spite of all the oppositions of the powers of darkness. The protestant cause is the cause of God, and shall arise, though it be small.

[3.] Christ is his people's peace, therefore *be not troubled*. This may comfort us in reference to others that are in the midst of these wars. The remnant of those that fear God, find rest in Christ, even in troublous times: see Micah v. 5. John xvi. 33. If trouble should ever come within our own border, here is our Noah, here is our ark, this same shall comfort us. In him we have peace with God, Rom. v. 1.—all clear and calm between us and heaven; peace in our own bosoms; all sedate and quiet there, no rumours of wars.

[4.] The name of the Lord is a strong tower, therefore *be not troubled*. Into this citadel the vanquished may retire and find shelter, and a refuge that they cannot be beaten out of, Prov. xviii. 10. This is a strong hold, inaccessible, insuperable, and which cannot be taken. The power and providence of God are fortifications which cannot be scaled, nor battered, nor undermined. What need good people fear? Ps. xlvi. 1, 2. they have always a God to whom they may go.

[5.] Men are God's hand, therefore *be not troubled*. God is doing their own work by them all this while, and they are accomplishing his purpose, though they mean not so, Isa. x. 5, 7, 15. Ps. xvii. 13, 14. They are not only restrained by his hand, that they can do no more than he will suffer them, but they are used by his hand to do what he appoints them, what his hand and his counsel determined before to be done, Ps. lxxvi. 10. Isa. li. 13.

[6.] There will come a reckoning day, when all these things shall be reviewed; therefore *be not troubled*. The seeming disorders of providence shall all

be corrected at that day, when God will come and make *inquisition for blood*, from the blood of righteous Abel. Innocent blood shed by the sword of war, as well as by the sword of pretended justice, shall be required. Behold, the Judge standeth before the door, and the mighty men shall shortly stand at his bar, Isa. xxvi. 21. Rev. vi: 10.

[7.] The wars of the nations perhaps may end in the peace of the church. God can bring light out of darkness, and meat out of the eater. The greatest perplexities of the children of men may introduce the joys of the people of God: see Luke xxi. 28. Heb. xii. 2. compare Rev. xiv. 20. with xv. 3. and see *chap.* xix. 17, 18. Glorious times we hope are reserved for the church.

[8.] However, we are sure in heaven there are no wars nor rumours of wars, therefore *be not troubled.* All will be well there. Make that world sure, seek mansions in a heavenly Father's house, and that will keep trouble from the heart. At such times, blessed are the dead, that die in the Lord, Rev xiv. 13.

To conclude: 1. Let us thankfully own God's great goodness to us in this nation—that we have peace at home, a happy government, peaceable habitations, a defence on our glory, Isa. xxxiii. 20.

2. Let us not complain of the inconveniences that attend our being interested in the present war; the expense of it, or the abridging and exposing of our trade and property.

3. Let rumours of wars drive us to our knees. Pray, pray, and do not prophesy. Spread the matter before God, and you may greatly help the cause by your supplications.

4. Patiently wait the issue with a humble submission to the will of God. Do not limit him, nor prescribe to him. Let him do his own work in his own way and time.

# A FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED AT HACKNEY, JULY 11TH, 1714,

ON OCCASION OF THE MUCH-LAMENTED

## DEATH OF THE REVEREND MATTHEW HENRY,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL THERE.

BY W. TONG.

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JOHN xiii. 36. latter part.

*Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*

THESE words are the answer our Lord and Saviour gave to a hasty question proposed by the apostle Peter, *Lord, whither goest thou?* The occasion of that question was a dark saying that our Saviour dropt, ver. 33. *Little children, yet a little while I am with you: ye shall seek me; and, as I said to the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you.*

This affectionate disciple was so struck with that expression, that he seems not so much to mind what our Saviour added, that *they should love one another as he had loved them all;* but, as one whose heart was full, and could hold no longer, he breaks in abruptly upon his Master with this inquiry, *Lord, whither goest thou?*

Our Saviour thought fit to give a gentle check to the forward temper of his disciple, by answering as in the text, *Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.* Yet this did but raise his zeal the higher, and produced that warm expostulation, *Lord, why cannot I follow thee? I will lay down my life for thy sake.* Our blessed Lord, who knew Peter better than he knew himself, saw so much spiritual pride and self-sufficiency in that resolution, that he thought fit to take him down, and tell him of his approaching scandalous fall, *v.* 38.

In the temper and language of this disciple there was a remarkable mixture of good and evil, grace and corruption, much love to Christ, and too much confidence in himself; and in the reply that Christ makes to him in the words of the text, there is a wise mixture of reproof and encouragement suited to Peter's case.

1. Our Saviour checks the apostle's curiosity and self-confidence, *Whither I go thou canst not follow me now.* I am going to the cross, and thence to the crown and kingdom; but though thou hast been so long in my family, heard my doctrine, seen my miracles, and conversed so freely with me, thou canst not yet follow me; thy work is not yet done, thy soul is not yet ready, thou art not fully prepared for death and heaven.

2. He encourages the hope of his disciple, and his honest zeal; "*But thou shalt follow me afterwards.* Thou canst not follow me now, and therefore thou must be content to be left behind in this evil world; but my grace shall be working in thee and by thee, and thou shalt in due time be made ready to follow me both to the cross and to the kingdom. Thou shalt not be lost, though thou be left behind; *thou shalt follow me afterwards.*"

I cannot but observe something in the countenance of this great assembly, that tells me it is expected I should take some particular notice, as others of my brethren have done before, of the surprising, lamented, long to be lamented, death of the late excellent pastor of this church.

And indeed it is upon that account that I have fixed my thoughts upon this text, these words of Christ to Peter, *Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.* I believe I am not the only person here who feels in himself a secret regret, that so dear, so faithful, so every way desirable, a friend has got the start of me, is gone to heaven before me, and left me behind him in this valley of sin and tears; but when my

heart is musing upon this unexpected parting, and wishing I had been so happy as to have gone to heaven with him, he seems to me to look back upon me, and bid me, for a while, farewell, in these words of the text, *Whither I go thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*

I hope I shall not be thought to presume too far, in accommodating these words of our blessed Lord to any mere man. I intend not hereby to compare the servant to his Lord, so as to set him upon a level with him, either in the excellency of his person, or the nature of his death; in both these respects I know and believe our Saviour *was alone, and of the people there was none with him.* Nor do I intend to compare myself to this blessed disciple, unless it be in those things in which he was least like himself. But certainly, conformity to Christ is every Christian's duty and honour; and where we see this conformity wrought up to a very eminent degree, our love to Christ will oblige us to esteem such persons the excellent of the earth, precious both in life and death; and we hope we may, without offending God, wish that we might have our lot with them living and dying.

That man must be worse than Balaam, who does not desire *to die the death of the righteous, and that his latter end may be like his*, Numb. xxiii. 10. Good men will be ready to carry their desires further, not only to die like the righteous, but, if it were the will of God, to die with them; especially with those of them, to whom their souls have been long united by the sweet and sacred bonds of an intimate and religious friendship: having been *lovely and pleasant in their lives*, they would have thought it a favourable providence, if *in death they had not been divided*, 2 Sam. i. 23.

When Christ told his disciples that his beloved friend Lazarus was dead, Thomas was so affected with it, that he made a sudden motion to the rest of the disciples, *Let us also go, that we may die with him*, John xi. 16. You will find that affectionate proposal so excellently opened and applied by the late Reverend Mr. How, in his funeral sermon for Dr. Bates, that I cannot but recommend it earnestly to your review on this occasion. I have not the least doubt but that extraordinary person was able to speak the words of Thomas from his very heart at that time, though with a due subjection to the Father of spirits. I am confirmed in this persuasion, by what I myself had the opportunity to observe for some years together, of those stedfast hopes and holy desires with which he waited for his great change. And I very well remember what I have heard from an eminent, wealthy, and religious citizen, (alderman Rodbert,) in whose house that venerable person Mr. Richard Fairclough died, that when Mr. How visited him on his death-bed, and they discoursed together in a very affectionate manner upon the glory of heaven, Mr. How familiarly said to him, "To this glory you are hastening; but why will you not take me along with you?" And then answered himself, "But we must, with good old Simeon, have leave to die from him who is the Lord of life."

I could mention some other such instances, which, how much soever they may be derided by men of defiled consciences and earthly minds, plainly show there is something in the temper of a serious, godly person, that suggests such desires and wishes as these, when he sees his dear companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ going to heaven before him, What do I do loitering and lingering here? why could I not have gone along with them?

What I shall offer to your thoughts upon this affecting and important subject, will be under these two general heads:

I. To consider, what it is that makes it so desirable to go along with our godly friends into the other world. And,

II. What reason we have to be quiet and patient in continuing here a while longer, even when our best friends are gone before us.

I. What is it that makes it so desirable to go along with our faithful godly friends into another world?

If a man would give his affectionate thoughts their full scope, many things might be mentioned to this purpose; but I shall confine myself to these three:

1. Had we gone along with such deceased friends we should now have been delivered with them from the evils of this world, which they have left.

2. We should have been now put into possession with them of the blessedness of that world to which they are gone.

3. The sorrow of parting by this means would have been prevented.

1. Could we have gone along with our godly deceased friends, we should now have been delivered, as they are, from the many evils of this world, which they have left.

The present world is an evil world, God frequently tells us so in his word, the faithful servants of God find it so, and even the men of this world themselves, when they come to leave it, confess it is so, though they would not believe it before.

It is so evil a world, that our blessed Lord was resolved he would deliver his people out of it at any rate; and, rather than fail, he would give his life, he would give himself, to accomplish the great design; and God the Father approved of the resolution, as worthy of the wisdom and grace of Christ, and exactly correspondent to his own mind and will: *Who gave himself for us, that he might deliver us from the present evil world*, (or out of this present evil

world,) *according to the will of God and our Father*, Gal. i. 4.

The evils of this present world are innumerable, but the chief of them may be reduced to these three heads; sin, affliction, and the danger we are in of miscarrying for ever.

(1.) Sin: this indeed is the greatest evil, and the procuring cause of all the rest; and it is no small burthen to those whose hearts are tender and upright with God.

They are grieved to see so much sin committed in the world, their righteous souls are vexed at the filthy conversation of those among whom they live; the bare-faced atheism and infidelity of some, the gross and scandalous profaneness and immoralities of others, are a trouble and a terror to them. To see the glorious gracious God so much dishonoured and provoked, to see precious souls in such numbers so desperately destroying themselves, good men have much ado to bear the beholding of it with their eyes, it makes them weary of the world; they think themselves unhappy thus to dwell in *Mesech*, and to sojourn in the tents of *Kedar*, Ps. cxx. 5.

They are grieved yet more to see so much sin in their own families, among their near relations; and how few are there who have not this cause of sorrow, less or more! The daughters of Heth were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah, so great, that Rebekah declared, *she was weary of her life because of them*, Gen. xxvii. 46.

They are most of all grieved to feel so much sin still remaining and working in their own souls, they have known the evil of it, it has been to them more bitter than death, and yet they are not free from it; it makes them loathe themselves, to think there should be still so much in them of that abominable thing that the soul of God hates, and that they should by in-dwelling sin, be so often hindered in that which is good, and drawn into that which is evil; they sigh and groan for a full deliverance, and a sinless immortality, where they shall never say or do a foolish thing any more, never entertain a foolish sinful thought or desire any more.

Now, in the multitude of those thoughts which they have about their good friends deceased, this presents itself readily to them. They have now ceased from sin. While they were with us, they had their complaints as well as we, they often bewailed the deceitfulness of their own hearts, their unbelief, formality, deadness, and distractions in holy duties; but now all is well with them, all their complaints over; sin is abolished, it has no place, no being, with them: and if we might have had leave to have gone along with them, our complaints of this kind had been over too, and all had been right and well in our souls; but, alas! we are left behind in a sinful world, and which is worse, are ourselves daily sinning in it.

(2.) Affliction: this is another kind of evil with which the world abounds; sin has filled it full of sorrow; men are every where *walking contrary to God*, and God is justly *walking contrary to them. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, especially where men hold the truth in unrighteousness*, Rom. i. 18. Not only revealed by his word, but by his providence.

The best of Christians not being here free from sin, cannot expect to be free from affliction; they suffer from the hands of men, because they are better than others, and often suffer from the hands of God, because they are not so good as they should be; they are God's children, they are of his family, and he will correct them; judgment usually begins at the house of God, and their spirits being tender, and broken, and impressed with an awe of God, afflictions go nearer their hearts, and make a deeper wound in them than in other men.

Now as for these, our godly friends who are departed, all these calamities are overpast, they are entered into peace, the wrath of their enemies cannot reach them now, and their heavenly Father will never frown upon them any more; he receives their departing souls with this most sweet and gracious welcome, *In a little wrath I hid myself from thee for a moment, but with everlasting loving-kindness will I now have mercy on thee*, Isa. liv. 8.

And if we could have gone along with them to heaven, our troubles would have been over too, and all tears wiped away from our eyes by the tender hand of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we still remain in an evil world, and seem to be reserved for yet greater trials. Since so many that stood in the gap are removed, we can conclude no other, but that they are taken away from the evil to come; that they are safely housed before the storm comes; they are gone to a good home, and gone home in a good time; *henceforth, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;* and it had been happy for us, if it had been the will of God, that we had died with them; especially considering,

(3.) The danger that we are yet in of miscarrying for ever. And this is not the least of the evils we groan under in this world, *fightings without, and fears within:* dangerous temptations are daily assaulting our souls, and these occasion sad misgivings of heart, lest we should one day fall by our spiritual enemies.

The serious Christian has his hopes, and though they are often but weak and wavering, he would not be without them for a thousand worlds; but he has his fears too, and not without cause; the concern is vastly great, the battle is not yet over, he has not yet reached the mark, nor won the prize; a disappointment would be fatal and irrecoverable. The heart is deceitful; many have flattered themselves to their

own ruin; and the humble Christian thinks with himself, What if I should do so too? The very possibility of being deceived in a matter of endless consequence, is enough to shake the firmest mind, and to make it tremble.

The case of a Christian in his journey to eternity, is like that of a man that is to go over a narrow and long bridge, that lies upon high and rugged rocks, from whence there is a mighty precipice to the deep waters; though the bridge be strong, and his hold sure, yet he cannot forbear looking down to the rocks and river so far below him, and he is ready to shiver and tremble when he thinks, If I should fall, what a dreadful fall would this be! Though the Christian has the strong bridge of the covenant to go over, yet he cannot avoid meditating terror, when he thinks what it is to fall into the bottomless pit, and lake that burns with fire and brimstone; he is upon a sure foundation, he has sure hold of Christ, or rather Christ has sure hold of his soul, and yet he trembles when he looks down and thinks, If I should fall, what a desperate fall would that be!

Now, those holy ones who are got safe over the narrow bridge of death, have nothing more to fear; they are safe landed, the risk is run and over; the matter is fixed, they are in heaven already. They are where they would be, and where sometimes they were afraid they should never have come; but those fears have now no room in their souls; the battle is won, the victory gained, the day is their own, and they are safe for ever.

And if we had gone along with them, our dangers and fears had been over too; but we have not attained, we are not already perfect; we know not what deep, what dark and dangerous, steps we have yet to take, how often our feet may slide; we know our blessed Saviour is able to keep us from falling, and we hope he will do so, but *hope deferred maketh the heart sick;* and when such a one as Paul was at so much pains to keep under *his body, and bring it to subjection, lest while he preached to others he himself should be a cast-away*, (1 Cor. ix. 27.) we cannot think ourselves above all fear: we are admonished to fear, *lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it*, Heb. iv. 1. It was from this text that your deceased minister preached the Lord's day before he died; and I doubt not but it was with a serious concern upon his own soul, that he might not come short of the promised rest; but now all the care is over, he enjoys that everlasting rest that he so unweariedly pursued and pressed after; but we are left to *work out our salvation with fear and trembling*. This is one consideration that renders it desirable to have gone to heaven with our godly acquaintances, that we might with them have been fully delivered from all the evils of this present world.

2. We should have now possessed with them the blessedness of that world which they are gone to. How great that blessedness is, none among the living can tell; we understand but as children, and speak but as children, when we think and speak of the glories of heaven. Though we have now the evidence of our adoption, and know that we are the children of God, yet we know not what we shall be: but this we are sure, to be dissolved and to be with Christ, is far better than to be in the most prosperous condition in this world. Permit me here to give a few short hints.

(1.) In heaven the principles and habits of grace in the soul are all perfected. Those who are arrived safely there, know as they are known; their apprehensions are clear, distinct, and as adequate to their objects, as a created mind can admit of, in its highest improvement and most enlarged capacity; their love to God is now without any coldness or inconstancy, it is most pure, and perfectly refined from all sinister and selfish ends and interests. Their delight in God is now full, the top-stone is now brought forth to crown the building, and grace is ripened into glory.

(2.) The operations of these perfected graces are perfect too; their knowledge, love, and delight in God, are in continual exercise without any interruption; they are in more easy and pleasant exercise, without any opposition; they are in the most lively and vigorous exercise, without any weakness or weariness; they worship God day and night, and their work is their felicity, their rest and reward.

(3.) The blessed objects of their graces are now near to them, viewed by them, and fully enjoyed; they are made like to the angels of God, and with them by a spiritual sight they see God face to face; they behold him in his glory; that which Moses desired, but was not then able to bear, they enjoy with infinite pleasure; *God shows them his glory*, Exod. xxxiii. 18. They look with stedfast pleasure and wonder upon the Lord Jesus Christ; they walk with him in white in the heavenly paradise: and what soul can imagine the delightful conversation they have with him in those most pleasant walks; with what mutual joy and satisfaction their Redeemer and they record the wonderful steps of that rich grace, that found them in such depths of misery, and raised them to such a height of glory? They have the fullest, sweetest, and most satisfying sense, relish, and assurance of the free, unchangeable, peculiar, distinguishing love of God to them; God rejoiceth over them, and rests in his love towards them, and they rejoice and rest in him and his favour for ever.

I am persuaded none will blame me, if I here insert some passages, which your deceased minister has gathered up out of a sermon preached by his excellent father, on the death of Mr. William Laurence. Addressing himself to the widow and father-

children, he uses the words of Christ in Luke ii. 28. *Weep not for me,* &c. and thus enlarges n them: "It is said of Abel, that being dead, he speaketh; if our deceased friend and brother is dead, could be heard speaking, this is what would say, My dear wife and children, my r brothers and sisters, my dear neighbours and nds, weep not for me, for you have something to do with your tears. And having described evils he was freed from, he proceeds thus:

Consider the happiness I am entered into. uld you know where I am? I am at home in my her's house, in the mansion prepared for me re. I am where I would be, where I have long often desired to be; no longer on the stormy , but in a safe and quiet harbour: my working e is done, and I am resting; my sowing time is ıe, and I am reaping; my joy is as the joy of the vest.

'Would you know how it is with me? I am de perfect in holiness, grace is swallowed up in ry, the top-stone of the building is brought forth. ould you know what I am doing? I see God, I him as he is, not as through a glass darkly, face to face, and the sight is transforming, it kes me like him. I am in the sweet enjoyment my blessed Redeemer, my Head, and Husband, om my soul loved, and for whose sake I am ling to part with all. I am here bathing myself the spring-head of heavenly pleasures and joys utterable: I am here keeping a perpetual sabbath; at that is, judge by your short sabbaths: I am e singing hallelujahs incessantly to him that sits on the throne, and rest not day and night from ising him.

'Would you know what company I have? Bless- company, better than the best on earth: here holy angels, and the spirits of just men made rfect. I am set down with Abraham, and Isaac, d Jacob, in the kingdom of God, with blessed ul and Peter, and James and John, and all the nts; and here I meet with many of my old ac- aintances that I have fasted and prayed with, o have got before me hither.

"And, lastly, Will you consider how long this is continue? It is a garland that never withers, rown of glory that fades not away; after millions millions of ages it will be as fresh as it is now: d therefore weep not for me."

I have taken only so much as relates to the bless- ness of heaven; and it is described in such sweet, ely, and unaffected strains, so suitable to the ex- llent, heavenly spirit of him that spoke it, I am re it deserves to be often read over, and seriously nsidered by us all.

3. If we had gone with our godly friends to hea- n, the sorrow of parting had been prevented; and need not tell some of you, that is no little sorrow; the experience of those who have lost such relations and friends will speak for me, and speak much more emphatically than I can. It is hard parting with a faithful minister, who *naturally cares* for the spiritual state of his people. It is hard parting with a tender, faithful, affectionate yoke-fellow, who has been for many years helping you forward in the way to heaven; with an affectionate parent, who was as compassionate to the souls of his children, as careful of their bodies and outward welfare. To part with such, is like cutting off a right hand: when such a one leaves us, he takes part of our very life and soul along with him, and we feel ourselves only to survive. Such a parting, such a loss, imbitters every thing in the world to the sorrowful survivors. Nothing is now to them what it was before; life itself is less valuable; house, family, food, raiment, rest, conversation, none of these things are what they used to be. There is a kind of blast and death upon every thing, an emptiness in every thing, when we can no longer enjoy the endeared friend who made every thing else pleasant to us. To souls united, not only in the bonds of nature, but of grace too, a separation, though it be but for a time, is hard to be borne. Now all this trouble and sorrow had been prevented, if we could have gone to heaven with them.

Such considerations as these represent it to us as a desirable thing, if it had been the will of God, that we had died with our excellent departed friends, and gone to heaven in company with them.

I now proceed,

II. To consider what reason we have to be quiet and patient in continuing here a while longer, even when our best friends are gone before us.

To men of carnal minds, who have their portion in this world, this will appear very needless; they are willing enough to stay here, whoever goes before, and would rather be left alone upon the earth, than leave a world they love so well, to enter upon a state their hearts are wholly strangers to. When they hear that death is to the righteous a deliverance, and that Christ gave himself to procure for his people such a deliverance, the secret language of their souls is, "God deliver me from such a deliverance."

But as for those who have laid up their treasure in heaven, and whose hearts are there, they find it more difficult to be content to live, than willing to die, and especially when they see one intimate faithful Christian friend after another, go before them.

But yet, even these, if they would recollect themselves, and consider every thing with a calm, composed, and dispassionate mind, may see sufficient reason to acquiesce in the will of God, who has ordered it so, that when others are taken they should still be left in a sinful calamitous world: and that they may be enabled in holy patience to possess

their own souls, I would suggest a few things to them.

1. Consider, that in dying work, every one must expect to be alone; though you should die in the same place, and at the same time, with your best friends, yet both they and you must be alone in dying. It is a work by itself, and every one must die for himself, and enter into eternity as much alone, as if none else had died besides him. Departing souls cannot help, cannot comfort or counsel, one another in the article of death; it does not appear that they can have any communion with each other in dying. While they lived, they could converse together about death and eternity, and comfort and encourage each other about those awful concerns; but though they should enter together into the valley of the shadow of death, they must expect to part there, and lose the sight and society of each other there, and each of them must have to do alone with God, the Father of their spirits, in that important moment of dying. And why then should any be impatient, because they are left behind their godly friends, since there must have been a parting in death, though they should have died in the same moment? But,

2. You would do well to inquire, whether you are yet so thoroughly prepared for death and heaven as those who are gone before you. If you are not, you have not only reason to be patient, but to be thankful to God that he has given you a little more time. Dying work is hard work; it requires not only an habitual but an actual preparation; and there needs a great deal to actual meetness for death and heaven: it is not a passionate wish for death, or weariness of life, that makes the soul ready for another world. You sometimes think you would be glad to be gone, but are you as ready as you are willing?

Are you sure there is not yet something wanting in you, which you cannot so well die without? Is there no breach between God and your souls, that you have not so seriously considered, and endeavoured that it might be made up by a particular application to the blood of Christ? If there be, you cannot imagine how difficult that very thing might have rendered your dying work to you.

You seem to be very much weaned from the world since your best friends are gone out of it; but is this weanedness as great in reality as it is in your present opinion? For all your haste to be gone, if the world and you were just now to part, it may be you would find your hearts cleave faster to it, and come with more difficulty from it, than you imagine.

It may be your house is not yet set in order; something is omitted, that both in prudence and in conscience ought to be done; and if that defect be not supplied, it may prove a great distraction to your dying thoughts.

Perhaps there is some latent corruption in you[r] yet sufficiently lamented and subdued. This [w]as the very case of Peter; his self-confidence must [be] discovered to him, and repented of, and mortifi[ed] before he was fit to die; perhaps it may be so [w]ith some others, who in a warm and affectionate fram[e] may seem to themselves very willing to be gone.

Now if any of these things be your case, you ha[ve] cause to bless God, that he has been so tender [of] you and indulgent to you; he has given you m[ore] time, that you may be better prepared to encounte[r] your last and great enemy, and to make the sure and concerns of your souls more sure and clear, b[e]fore you go to that place where there is no furth[er] work to be done for eternity.

You are ready to think God has been more kin[d] to your deceased friends than he has been to you; but if you better consider the matter, you may s[ee] cause to be very thankful to him, that he had mo[re] regard to the real wants of your souls, than to the[ir] hasty wishes. Jonah was impatient to live when h[is] gourd was withered, he *wished for death, and said, It is better for me to die than to live;* (*ch.* iv. 8, 9.) b[ut] he was not so ready to die; that was no good fram[e] to be found in at death; he must be more calm an[d] cool, and better reconciled to the will of God; and therefore God condescends to reason the case wi[th] him in a most kind and compassionate manner, t[o] bring him to himself; God would not let him di[e] in that peevish humour; and doubtless Jonah w[as] made sensible before he died, that his God had dea[lt] tenderly with him, in giving of him time to recove[r] a better frame of soul than that which he was i[n] when he so passionately wished for death.

3. But though you are ever so well prepared fo[r] death and heaven, yet if God has any more work f[or] you to do in the world, it becomes you to stay wi[th] patience till you have done it.

You are Christians, and you have been often to[ld] that Christians *do not live to themselves nor die to themselves, but whether they live they live to the Lord, or whether they die they die to the Lord:* and this ha[s] have been very seriously and very seasonably put i[n] mind of, but a few days ago, on this very occasion.* It is not for you peremptorily to choose either lif[e] or death, but to refer it to him who is the Lord o[f] life, to appoint that for you which may be most fa[r] his own glory. You are serving your heavenly Fa[-] ther and your blessed Redeemer, to whom you ow[e] all you are, and have, and can do, and you are serv[-] ing your generation according to the will of God; and you should be well pleased with it, both for th[e] work's sake, and for his sake who has called you to it.

If others have done their work before you, it was fit they should go to heaven before you; it will be time enough for you to rest, when your work is done.

* By the Rev. Dr. Williams, on Rom. xiv. 7, 8.

ıld you leave any part of it undone? This very
e is well stated and determined by the apostle
ıl, in Phil. i. 21, &c. *To me to live is Christ, and
'ie is gain: but if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit
ny labour; yet what I should choose I know not:
I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to de-
t and be with Christ, which is far better: neverthe-
to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.*
t becomes you as the servants of the Lord, re-
med by him, to be willing that your rest and hap-
ess should be deferred for a while, if in the mean-
e you may bring more glory to God and your
iour, and do more service to his interest in the
·ld; and if you are doing his will on earth, while
ers are beholding his face in heaven, you must
ık yourselves well employed, for his glory should
dearer to you than any interests of your own.
Tou are servants to your Creator and Redeemer,
l you must stay till you have leave to die. He
o called you to your work, expects you should
de by it with obedient patience till he also call
ı from it, and in due time he will call, and then
ı may give a cheerful answer, knowing that he
l have a desire to the work of his own hands, Job
'. 15.
[t is not for want of love to his disciples, that
rist keeps them in this world sometimes longer
ın they could wish; he has a desire to them, and
the work of his hands in them, but yet he will not
ve them (like your season birds) all to take wing
d fly away together; for what then would become
his cause and interest in the world? In the same
ıyer where he declares it to be his will that all
ıse the Father had given him, should be with him
ierever he is, to behold his glory, yet he also de-
ıres it is not his desire they should all leave the
rld now, or all at one time: *I pray not that thou
uldst take them out of the world, but that thou
uldst keep them from the evil*, John xvii. 15.
4. You complain that some of your best friends
ve got the start of you, and reached heaven before
ı; but pray consider, is it not well for you, if
:y left you in the way to heaven, following after as
u are able? All travellers are not of the same
:ed, some have more strength, more activity, and
: better furnished for their journey, and meet with
ver hinderances, and so move faster, and get sooner
their journey's end; but it is some comfort to
ɔse who cannot keep pace with them, that those
ıo are gone before can tell their friends at home,
ıt they have left them upon the road, in the right
ıy, and making what haste they could after.
You find it is some exercise of your patience, to
: that those who did not set out for heaven before
u, but some of them perhaps after you, have quite
lgone you, and have got home before you, but if
cy can carry this good report of you to heaven,
at you are in the ready road thither, that you are
not loitering, that you are not gone the wrong way, but that they left you in the King of heaven's high road, making the best speed you can, walking in the same spirit, in the same path of the just; this will cause joy in heaven, and may afford you comfort in the land of your pilgrimage. Are you moving Godward and heavenward? It is well, thank God, and take courage; remember how great a support this was to the blessed Paul, even while he was bemoaning himself that he had not yet attained to sinless perfection; *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*, Phil. iii. 12, 13.

5. Though you are left behind for a little while, yet if you keep close to God, and maintain communion with him through Christ, you may have even a heaven here upon earth: communion with God will make life comfortable, at the same time that it makes heaven so desirable. You think it long till you be joined to the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven, and till you begin your everlasting sabbath. Come, sirs, thank God through Jesus Christ, that you have a nail in his house here, and a place in the assemblies of his saints, and such comfortable sabbaths and sacrament days; that God thus vouchsafes to come down to you, before he thinks fit to take you up to himself.

The presence of God is the highest happiness of heaven itself; *Whom have I in heaven but thee?* Ps. lxxiii. 25. If you have the presence of God with you on earth, though it be not in so immediate a manner, and in so high a degree, yet it ought to be greatly valued by you, and should not only keep you quiet, but cause you to rejoice: you cannot have the presence of deceased friends any longer with you, and that makes you weary of the world, but you may have the presence of God even here, and is not that infinitely more? Good old Jacob left this with his children as a sufficient support to them, *Behold I die, but God shall be with you*, Gen. xlviii. 21. Is the gracious presence of God nothing to you? Is it not a great thing that the tabernacle of the Lord should be with men, and that he should dwell with you here on earth?

You say this is something, but it is not heaven: it is true, but it is the next door to heaven. Wherever we meet with God, we may say of that place, *This is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven*, Gen. xxviii. 17. Have you communion with God in secret and solemn acts of worship? Why then you are got within the borders, and even in the suburbs, of heaven. You are in the very gates of the

city; and their God is preparing your souls, and making them ready for his more immediate glorious presence. Here is no room for discontent, but abundant cause for holy love and thankfulness.

6. You lament it that you are not yet in heaven; but know this for your comfort, that if you be in Christ Jesus, you shall as sure be there in a little time as if you were there already. I speak here of the objective certainty, the certainty of the event; not of the subjective certainty, the assured persuasion of your souls concerning it. In this respect, you may be in doubt, and apprehensive of the danger of missing your way, and being lost for ever, as I have already observed; but if you be in Christ, there is no condemnation to you, Rom. viii. 1. Your state is safe, and your end shall be peace. You are kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto salvation. Your spiritual life is hid with Christ in God; it shall not be lost. Your salvation is nearer than when you first believed, Rom. xiii. 11. It will not be long but you will overtake your friends who are gone before; you will come up to them at your Father's house; though death has separated you for a while, yet that same death shall bring you together again; when they died, then you parted for a while, and when you die you shall meet them again. The great boat that carried them over Jordan, to the land of promise, will, in a little time, come back again and fetch you, and bring you together. This Christ assured Peter of, *Thou shalt follow me afterwards.*

The same grace that has brought them to glory is ready for you, and sufficient for you. If your hearts be right with God, you and they are built on the same foundation; you have embarked in the same vessel; you have the same skilful pilot to steer you; and after you have been tossed to and fro on a tempestuous world a while longer, you also shall come safe to the desired haven. They once had their fears, as you now have; *but the foundation of the Lord stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows who are his,* 2 Tim. ii. 19. The same evidence you have of the sincerity of your faith and holiness, the same you have of your eternal happiness; for it is unalterably settled between the Father and the Son, that of all that are given to Christ, none should be lost, but all forthcoming at the last day; that every one that believeth in Christ should have everlasting life, John vi. 39, 40. You are in the hands of Christ; all his saints are in his hand; and none shall be able to pluck you out of that safe and powerful hand.

7. And lastly, When you are once got safe to heaven, you will have as long a term in your happiness as those who are gone thither before you. Yours is everlasting, and theirs can be no longer. If the blessedness of the saints in heaven were only for a limited season, though ever so long, you would have some excuse for envying those who are gone before; for they would enjoy more of heaven than you; their lease would be longer than yours, because it commenced before yours. But in eternity there is not properly a longer or shorter term; *one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* When you have been a thousand years in heaven, your happiness is as much beginning, and as far from ending, as it was at the first moment of your entrance there.

The apostle observes, (1 Thess. iv. 17.) that the different circumstances of dying before Christ's second coming, or remaining alive at that day, would make no material difference in their happiness, because they *shall all be for ever with the Lord.* This being for ever with the Lord makes up all; it swallows up all lesser distinctions of the time and manner of going to heaven: this will effectually silence all emulous complaints, and perfectly unite the sons of God in holy love and joy; *they shall all be for ever with the Lord.*

I have now considered both what it is that prompts us to wish we had died with our holy acquaintance who are gone before us; and what reason we have patiently to wait here, till our great Lord shall give us a kind dismission.

It remains that we should bring these things home to ourselves by a close and serious application. I can but give you a few hints, and must leave you to enlarge upon them yourselves, depending upon the help of God's Holy Spirit to make all effectual.

1. Instead of repining that our best and most beloved friends are gone before us, let us set ourselves to improve their life and death for the establishment of our souls in the belief of an unseen eternal world, and of the blessedness of the saints in that world. If you say, Who does not believe this? I am sure I may say, Who is there that does not need to pray, *Lord, help my unbelief?* We are dull of understanding, and slow to believe the invisible realities of the other world. A strict observation of wise and good men is a great establishment to our faith. Let us remember their holy conversation, their zeal, their diligence, their self-denial, their fervent desires after God and Christ, and the delightful hopes they had of the glory to be revealed; how they fetched their comforts from heaven by faith and hope, when this world frowned most upon them. What shall we think? Were they deceived? Is all this come to nothing? Was their faith a mere fancy, and their lively hope only a pleasant dream? It can never be: there is a life beyond this; they knew it to be so; they had tasted of the powers of the world to come, not in a superficial manner, but by deep and satisfying experience; they had heavenly affections, excellent designs, and delightful expectations, all which centred in a world of everlasting rest with God. Are all these perished with

heir dead bodies? No, surely: who that believes a God, can think he would suffer the wisest, the most holy, and every way the best men in the world, thus to flatter themselves; and that only the foolish, vicious, unthinking part of mankind should happen to be in the right? It can never be. Verily, there is a reward for the righteous, and his expectation shall not be cut off.

2. Let the death of our godly friends teach us to think of heaven more frequently, and with greater affection and delight. Indeed, when we consider heaven as the glorious throne of God, and the seat of the blessed angels, we should for that reason raise our thoughts and our hearts thither; but no man hath seen God at any time; we have little acquaintance with the holy angels; but we have seen and known many of the blessed saints who are now in heaven; we had familiar acquaintance with some of them, our souls were knit to them. Now though we should chiefly value heaven for the sake of the Divine Presence that shines most gloriously there, yet we may ascend in our thoughts to God by the scale of the creatures; and what we saw in good men of God, of Christ, and heaven, while they lived with us here, should make us to love God, and Christ, and heaven more, and meditate more upon them, since so many who bore the image of the heavenly are now gone thither.

It has been often observed, that when Esther was taken into the court of Ahasuerus, *Mordecai took a walk every day before that gate, ch.* ii. 11. We should follow our friends in our thoughts and desires, to that blessed state into which they are entered.

Nature teaches us to love the place of our fathers' sepulchres; we look with affection upon the very graves of our friends, and take pleasure even in their dust. Should we not then much more frequently and affectionately meditate upon the glorious world to which their precious souls are gone? By this means, we not only show our affection to them, but we maintain some kind of communion still with them.

3. Instead of passionately wishing that we had died with our friends who are gone to heaven, let us be followers of them, as they were of Christ: if we ever expect to come to them in heaven, we must be such as they were upon earth. Natural conscience and natural affection may put us upon wishing we had gone with our pious acquaintance into the other world, because we believe they are happy. This amounts to no more than Balaam's wish; but we must be found walking in the path of the just, if ever we arrive at their happiness; and whenever we think of them with affections of love and sorrow, we should presently charge ourselves not to be slothful, but followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises, Heb. vi. 12.

Let us consider with ourselves, we have heartily wished that we had died with those excellent ones; but if God had taken us at our word, and death had found us out of Christ, out of the covenant, out of the way of good men, it would have separated us from them; though we had died with them, our souls and theirs would have taken a quite contrary way; we should have lost their company not only in dying, but after death, and never have met them again, till we had met at the judgment seat of Christ, they on the right hand, and we on the left; and if indeed we loved them so well, let us think with ourselves what a woful meeting that would be to us! The very sight of them would add to our confusion and misery.

4. Since we must not yet enjoy their company in heaven, let us converse more with their surviving labours here on earth: these are like the mantle that Elijah dropt when he left this world, and Elisha so carefully preserved and used. Some of the servants of Christ who are gone, live still in their excellent works; and by these, being dead, they continue to speak to us. This is the case now before us: your laborious, faithful pastor has left behind him most excellent remains, such as shall never die. I am persuaded, as long as the Bible continues in England, those admirable expositions of his upon it will be prized by all serious Christians. In them you have his clear head, his warm heart; his life, his soul appears to be in them: prize them more, read them more than ever you have done; and while you are seriously perusing those excellent books, besides many others published by him, you will seem to yourselves to have Mr. Henry still with you. It is in vain for us to pretend that we had a great value for the lives of such as he, if we neglect their labours, in which so much of their life was spent.

5. Since it is the will of God that we should be still alive when our best friends are gone, let us endeavour to fill up their places as well as we can here on earth. Their death is a public loss, and leaves a wide breach in our fence: let us all, according to the duty of our several places, stand in the gap, and endeavour to turn away the anger of God from the land. Are so many of our humble, praying, wrestling Israels gone? Let those who remain pray more, and pray better. Are so many diligent ministers gone? Let those who remain be more than ever *instant in season, out of season*, and look up to him who has the residue of the Spirit, to pour it forth afresh, that the church and nation may be as little losers as possible. If we do not so, the churches of Christ will have *sorrow upon sorrow;* sorrow for the loss of those who are gone, and sorrow for the sloth of those who are left behind.

6. And lastly, Let us live in the well-grounded hope of following our godly friends to heaven, and meeting them there, and being together for ever

with the Lord; lay the ground-work of such hope sure and strong, for the superstructure is to reach as high as heaven; and when you have done this, then rejoice in hope. I know nothing that can better support your spirits under the loss of such excellent ones, than a lively hope of a speedy meeting again in a better world; the time of separation is but short, yet a little while and you shall see them again; you parted in sorrow, you shall meet in joy. Perhaps you had not the opportunity of seeing some of them die, of closing their eyes, and bidding them farewell: but that shall not hinder your joyful meeting; and how will you then welcome each other into a world of bliss, and wonder to see how much you are all changed for the better, since your last parting! How will you congratulate each other in the favour of your blessed Lord, who has washed your souls so clean, and made them so glad! But I must stop my thoughts here, that are ready to run out beyond bounds. Comfort yourselves and one another with these things.

I know I speak to many this day who need such comforts. Here is a great congregation, bereaved of a most faithful, wise, laborious minister; here is a disconsolate family, bereaved of one of the most exemplary and useful relations that I ever knew any family blessed with. How is a great blow given to us all! The death of Mr. Henry is an universal loss! It is and will be universally lamented.

Expect not, sirs, that I should enter upon the particulars of his excellent character; very much has been said of him already in a little compass, by that worthy aged minister who first preached to you on this mournful occasion.

I hope this will be more fully done in an account of his exemplary life: that constant diary he kept, will furnish out proper and excellent materials, besides what may be added from the observation of others.

But that which chiefly restrains me now is, that it is needless to do it in this place; for though you have not enjoyed him much above two years, yet in that time you *have known his doctrine, his manner of life, his purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, and patience*, 2 Tim. iii. 10.

And who has not known him? His works praise him in the gates, and will do so; his great and good works from the pulpit, from the press, his immense labours, his incredible diligence in preaching, in expounding, in writing, his care of all the churches: he, like *Demetrius, had a good report of all men, and of the truth itself; and we also bear witness, and ye know that our witness is true*, 3 John 12.

He had in him that happy mixture of excellent gifts and graces that seldom meet in the same person, and they made him very amiable to all who knew him.

In him you had the happy mixture of great strength of judgment and fervour of spirit. Some are very zealous, but not so judicious; others judicious but not so zealous: he was both a burning and a shining light.

In him you had a true greatness of soul, mixed with exemplary modesty and humility; nothing in him appeared sordid and abject, nothing vain and supercilious.

In him you had a most agreeable cheerfulness, with a due temperament of solidity and seriousness.

In him you might observe a strict regard to the dictates of his own conscience, joined with a most candid tenderness to those who differed from him.

In his preaching you had a very just and close way of thinking, with the most plain, proper, natural, and easy expression, and a great regard to the honour of Christ and free grace, joined with a constant endeavour to beat down sin, and revive the power and practice of godliness.

It was this happy conjunction of excellent gifts and graces, that made him live so much desired, and die so much lamented.

I am a witness of that tender and conscientious concern with which he left his old and dear friends at Chester, and of that comfort and satisfaction he had in his acceptance and usefulness in this part of the vineyard. I am persuaded, these last two years of his life and labours have been a great blessing to many souls in and about the city of London.

My own interest in his acquaintance and friendship for the space of above twenty-eight years, is a thing of too private a nature to mention upon so solemn an occasion; but it must never be forgotten by me. I own it as a precious talent put into my hand, and to be accounted for. He was a most cordial, prudent, faithful, unalterable friend: and if a passionate affection does not deceive me, I think verily I shall less value this life and world, since he is gone from it.

The death of this faithful servant of Christ at this time is a very dark and threatening providence: God calls us to more than common sorrow by it; he expects we should lay it to heart; and, all the circumstances of it considered, both those of a private and public nature, we should lay it nearer to our hearts than ordinary. We should not suffer it to pass over us lightly; we should feel our loss, and fear the displeasure of our God, and tremble because of the ark of God.

But yet we must not abandon ourselves to inconsolable grief, nor quarrel with God, nor despair of his mercy to us.

As for the broken family, I am persuaded there are great mercies in store for them: the fatherless children are left with God, and he will keep them alive; and let the widow trust in him. Though God in this sad providence seems to have spoken against them, I believe he will earnestly and affectionately remember them still.

I know no family in which the entail of the covenant from one generation to another has more evidently appeared. I know no family more enriched with a large stock of treasure of prayers by religious predecessors on both sides. And a family that is as rich in prayer, is rich in the promises too, while present branches of it adhere to the covenant, and live up to their education; and we rejoice to see that it is thus with them, and daily pray for their growth and establishment in wisdom and grace.

And for this afflicted broken congregation, though they ought to be sensible what they have lost, a skilful guide, and a faithful helper of their souls; one who, they hoped, would have been the happy instrument of great good, not only to themselves, but to their families; one that was wonderfully fitted to feed the lambs of the flock, and took great delight in that part of his work.

Yet let them not distrust the care of the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. This place and people have been signally owned and favoured of God, from one time to another. In the mount it hath been seen that God has provided; and we hope he will have the same care and concern for you still. And the great respect you always had for your faithful ministers while they were with you, and the true christian generosity with which you have treated their families when they have been gone, gives us good encouragement that the presence of God shall be the glory in the midst of you; and that you shall yet have a pastor according to his own heart, who shall carry on the same work, feed you with the same sincere milk of the word, and be a great blessing to you, and the rising generation among you.

And though the church of God in general feels this loss, and laments it greatly, that this your minister was taken away before he had finished the great undertaking, his noble, delightful task, the Exposition of the Bible; yet we have all cause to bless God, who spared him so long, and helped him to carry it on so far.

It is the observation of a worthy minister, on the death of a person of great note in all the churches, who had a heart enlarged for God, and bent upon doing more eminent service, that "no one ever finished all the great designs he had for the glory of God in this world, excepting the Lord Jesus Christ. He indeed could say, *It is finished.*" As for others, their good desires and purposes go beyond the limits of their time and life; but they have finished all that God designed to do by them: and he is able to carry on his own work by other hands, and thereby to make it evident that he is to his people *all in all.*

And I hope those who have attended long upon the ministry of good Mr. Henry, and taken down his expositions upon that part of the Bible that yet remains, whether in the public assembly or in his family, will carefully gather up those precious fragments, that none may be lost; and will communicate them to the world in the best way they can, that this great work may be finished, and be as much as possible his own performance.

To conclude: We must flee to this as our last resort; though ministers, the best of ministers, die, the gospel does not die with them. 1 Pet. i. 24, 25. *All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass; The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.*

# A FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED AT NANTWICH, JUNE 25TH, 1714,

ON OCCASION OF THE

## DEATH OF THE REVEREND MATTHEW HENRY,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

BY JOHN REYNOLDS.

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TO HIS TRULY HONOURED FRIEND

MRS. MARY HENRY,

LATE PIOUS RELICT OF THE DECEASED.

MADAM,

Little could I suspect that the report of such a discourse (meditated in such haste, and amidst such tumultuary thought and passion) would so soon have reached London; and be, from thence, so solicitously desired to the press; and that, as a piece of further respect to the worthy memory that occasioned it. While that is pleaded, I must resign it, that it may sensibly appear (to those that will not otherwise be persuaded) how incompetent it is to serve so great a name and memory. And while I resign it, I must present it unto you, that I may take occasion thereby to beg of you, Madam, to dry up the falling tears, and put on, now, a sympathizing spirit: *Rejoice with him that rejoiceth:* the heavenly mind is got within the heavens; far beyond mortality and the mournful contingencies of it. Since the divine Good-will ordered your so long converse together in pious, pleasant harmony, let not the disposal of the same will occasion present discord. Rejoice that he has been (by grace) so good, so faithful unto death, and that he is now added to the triumphant communion. As you bless that God that gave him to you, bless him also that he lent him to you so long; and by him gave you so much cheerful assistance and encouragement in the way to heaven. Good Madam, do all you can to refuse the importunity of debilitating grief. Regard your health, even for the sake of those dear, living remains, that are now lain upon your care. You know time is short. Rejoice in hope of that glory to which he is gone, and where you will find him more loving, more amiable, and more happy than ever; and where (though the society of perfected saints will be an inconceivable felicity, yet) the blessed God and the Redeemer will be the supreme portion and delight. That the God of all grace would please to enlarge your patience to your trial, and sanctify the important affliction to you, and the young bereaved mourners with you, and proportion his strong consolations thereto, and be, jointly, your everlasting inheritance, is the sincere prayer of,

Madam,

Your truly sympathizing friend,

And real servant in sacred offices,

JOHN REYNOLDS.

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*DID our reverend, honoured, faithful brother (now withdrawn) act by prophetical instillation, when, at the obsequies of the late pious minister* of this place, he chose to treat upon that passage,* Sorrow upon sorrow? *This day are these words fulfilled in your ears, before your eyes. He himself is now become the occasion of our successive sorrow; of multiplied, aggravated sorrow; sorrow to city and country; sorrow to the church of God. But I would call to your meditation, upon this sorrowful day, a few charac-*

* See his sermon at Mr. Lawrence's funeral.

*words, which, I am apt to think, would occur st to every mind, upon the hearing the sad, sur- ing news of this decease.*

MATTHEW XXV. 21.

*Well done, thou good and faithful servant*, &c.

r can we choose but suppose, that, on last Tues- morning, this sentence was sensibly pronounced? *ually*, by the God of heaven, while he remanded servant of his from the pulpit; gave him his *tus* here, and ordered his entrance into heavenly and joy: *actually*, by the good angels of hea- while they met him on the other side the river of tal life; received him with a *Well done, good faithful fellow-servant!* You have, in your world, gently served your Lord and ours. We are now ly, at his command, to conduct and introduce into his presence and glory.

*Well done, good and faithful servant!* Can such a racter fall from such lips? such an encomium ssigned by the Son of God, the impartial Judge he world, to any of the fallen, apostatized race mankind? It must argue, that reconciling de- is have been a-foot; that recovering grace has n at work; that in and with some, it has pre- led; that, of accursed enemies and malignants, as raised them to the honour and office of good faithful servants.

'ime allows not to look into the contents of this ul chapter; or into the peculiar paragraph to ich these words belong. Supposing, therefore, that , in some competent measure, remembered, whose se words are here represented to be, to whom ken, and when; we take these observable truths our process, as supposed, intimated, or included rein.

. The Lord Jesus designs to come again. For, he st take cognizance of all human affairs. His vants shall be considered and regarded. He has at work to do, that requires his own hand and sence. He will put an end to this world, and all transactions of it; will wind up the work of re- mption, gather his servants together, and pass an iversal judgment. O the unconceivable day of return! How little do the world think of it! How noured and joyful will his servants be! How des- rate and confounded, the opposers of his gospel d kingdom!

2. The illuminated part of the world is a stage, ere persons are called to be servants, and service to be done for the Redeemer. We cannot but say, at all the inhabitants of the earth are under ob- ations to the blessed God, to love him and be de- ted to him; yea, so far as any of their indulgence d benefits depend upon and flow from the Re- emer's mediation, they are obliged to him for them. at they cannot expressly believe on him, or cleave to him, as long as they have not the means of being acquainted with him, with his mediation and grace. But in the enlightened lands, persons are *called to be saints;* called to be expressly devoted to God in Christ, and to act and walk according to such de- votion. They are the people called here to an ac- count; concerning whom the ultimate judgment proceeds, and among whom the Lord Christ expects to find his servants. There he has left work to be done. There he gives light and time for the doing of it; gives advantages and opportunities for the doing of it well; sends motives, alarums, and coun- sels, for making haste in doing of it. The church of Christ should be a busy place. All hands and hearts at work there. The service is important and sweet. Time hastens to its end. The negligent and loiterers will find themselves in a doleful condition at the Lord's return. It is an unanswerable question, *Why stand ye here, all the day, idle?* Here, in the Lord's vineyard, where is so much work to be done? where so many talents are continually distributed? where the Lord himself is so constant an inspector? and where idleness will be attended with so much ab- surdity and ingratitude? The enlightened world is a theatre for sacred service.

3. The Lord Christ hath his servants in this world of ours, and good and faithful ones too; though they are but few, indeed, now; and one the fewer by Tuesday's blow and breach. But as bad as the world is, there have been in it, there are and will be, those, that are intent upon the Redeemer's service. Where else will be the kindly issue and effect of his redemption? By the same right that he hath a seed, he must have servants; for his seed shall serve him, and shall reckon it their honour so to do. His spouse shall be his servant, and shall think her dig- nity consistent with her office, for *he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.* They that are good and faithful in this world, are peculiarly the servants of the Lord Christ. The Father's, that is, the Creator's, are fallen and lost. The grace, or the sanctity, given by the law of creation was soon forfeited and removed; the obligations that lay on man, on the account of original creation, were soon rejected and deserted. The exterminating curse of the law, and the devil, (by the temptation first, and the curse afterward,) soon prevails over the world. So, the Creator, as such, is like to have no servants here. It is a Re- deemer must raise and regain them. The Lord Christ comes to purchase, hire, and persuade them. He comes to purchase them. To purchase them out of the hands of legal, vindictive justice; out of the various thraldom and captivity in which they lay. *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself* (and to his own ser- vice) *a peculiar people, zealous of good works;* to hire them for himself and his service. He is the house- holder, that went out early in the morning to hire

labourers into his vineyard. He hires them by proposing and promising to them an unconceivable recompence of reward. He sets before them a crown of righteousness, a crown of glory. He says to them all, *Be ye faithful to the death, and I will give you a crown of life.* And not only so, but he persuades into his service. Persuades not only by moral motives, and intellectual incentives, but by the power of his determining grace, sweetly concurring therewithal. He so persuades as to prevail with souls to be good and faithful unto him. And so, the good and pious are peculiarly the Lord Christ's servants. They are his, not only by this efficiency of his love and grace, but by the disposition and inclination of their minds. They are sensible of their numerous and vast obligations to him. *The love of Christ* (the contemplation of his love to us) *constrains us* to judge, that we must live to him. They are desirous, in and by all their services, to be more acquainted with him: *That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.* They resign up themselves to his command and conduct, cleaving to him with purpose of heart. They love him with an incorruptible affection; love the service he requires, and particularly, what is suitable to redeemed ones. They are concerned for his interests on earth, desire the support and enlargement of his kingdom here, and breathe after his presence and glory. Well, therefore, may he take cognizance of them, as those that have been his own servants; faithful to himself.

4. Our Lord hath, among his servants, those that are eminently good and faithful. Such, that by way of discrimination, shall hear that applauding sentence, *Well done, good and faithful servants!* At least, some are faithful in the employment and improvement of more talents than others, having received more. Were we, indeed, to insist upon the accuracy and rigour of the parabolical account here, we might say, that all that are found faithful, are equally so. For he that well improves two talents, is as faithful as he that well improves five: the disparity lies not in the improvement, but in talents communicated and received. But, (not to intimate, that proportionably there may be a greater improvement of two talents by some than of five by others,) we may justly suppose, that it is not the design of our Lord's parabolical representation of things here, to signify that all his faithful servants are, with exact equality, so, in proportion to what they received; but only that, in general, of his servants (that are so by his trust, and their obligation) some are faithful, and some are not so. Of those that are faithful, some have received more than others, and have accordingly improved and gained more than others. As their stock hath been greater, so they have had their heads, and heart, and hands full of business, in order to manage and advance their stock. They have wrought hard; they have redeemed time; they have traded far; they have been concerned that their Lord should receive his own (as much as it was) with proportionable interest or usury. And so there is room and reason to give them, in the first place, the remunerant approbation, *Well done, good and faithful servants!* And sure, experience will testify, that all that are sincere, faithful under equal talents, are not yet equally faithful. Nay, have not many of our Lord's servants intrusted with few talents, been much more faithful than others, intrusted with more? May not this be spoken to our shame? How eminently faithful were they that lived in the dawning of the gospel and reformation among us! There are of those, to whom the Lord will in a distinguishing manner say, *Well done, good and faithful servants!*

5. Our goodness lies especially in faithfulness to the Lord Jesus. Then we are good, when we are faithful servants to him. The disciples have, otherwise, much sin. Should they be compared with the Father's, that is, the Creator's, law, they will be found miserably corrupt, defective, and guilty. More pollution runs through all their powers. Many a transgression they commit, and many an egregious defection they make from God, and their duty to him. His original law would condemn them all. But their faith in, their faithfulness to, the Redeemer may be styled their evangelical goodness. They are good in his eye, while they heartily abide with him. As amidst the exercise of moral virtue, and observance of those laws that secure the peace and order of this world, something is still wanting, if there is not a sovereign respect to the Lord Christ, Mark x. 17. So, if that dwell in the heart, it is habitually and denominatively good, whatever corruptions and disorders may also dwell there. As believers are, at present, far enough from perfection. But this sovereign respect to the Lord Christ, dwells in all the sanctified. The *saints* are *faithful* brethren in *Christ.* This faithfulness, in mind and heart, continues with them, amidst their falls and failures. Though temptations, sometimes, make a prey of them; yet they would not, for all the world, renounce their Lord and Master. They are desirous to follow him still, though sometimes they are faint, weary, discouraged, or sometimes stumble in their way. They may fall out sometimes among themselves, as Paul and Barnabas,) yet neither fall out with their Lord, nor with his service; but resolve to go on, and maintain their contract made to serve him. Should, in an hour of temptation, the proposal be made, as once it was, *Will ye also go away?* it would be refused with the same distaste, *Whither shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.* And while this disposition and choice abides, thy Lord will acknowledge thy goodness. Thou art good as long as thou art faithful to him.

6. The Lord Christ will call all his servants together, when he comes again. His faithful ones shall all be collected and united. He has something to say to them; something to do with them. Something to say to them, that will be to their utmost transport and joy. Something to do with them: to receive them to himself, and to conduct them to the felicity he has prepared for them, and promised to them. What a noble congregation will that be! The universal assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven! Oh holy, happy society! Holy, without blemish and mixture. Without blemish in their own persons. Incorporated spirits made perfect! made like to the angels of God! without mixture of any other persons among them. No goats then among the sheep, or tares among the wheat. Sinners shall not dare to stand in the congregation of the faithful. Happy society! Joyful in the love and smiles of their Lord, and in their love to each other! We know not how the transactions of that day will be so accurately managed as they are to be, without the knowledge of those we have known and conversed with before. We shall see those that we have offended, and that have offended us; those we have done good to, and those we have received good from. An account is to be given either with joy or with grief. *As ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.* Then shall these tears be wiped from your eyes. Ye shall see the faithful *Henry* again; see him rejoicing in and with all those, to whom his love and friendship, his ministrations and sacred services, have been savingly beneficial here.

7. When the Lord Christ comes, he will call his servants to an account; to an accurate, severe account: all his servants, good and bad, faithful and unfaithful. The words themselves, indeed, only bespeak an account of the good; but that account must suppose a discrimination of them from the bad; and the context extends the account further. The world is his; the church is his. The dwellers there are, by profession and obligation, his servants. The sacred advantages they enjoy, are talents committed to them by him. He sets them in a state of probation. He calls them to work, intrusts them with goods, and says, *Occupy till I come.* Negotiate, merchandize, trade and traffic, till I return. Intimating, that he will come to call to an account. And how strict is that account! He knows very well, to whom he has committed ten talents; to whom five; to whom one single one. O how little do we remember this account! how little do we study to give it up with joy!

8. When our Lord comes, his good servants shall appear in all their faithfulness before him. They shall come attended with all their faithful services to him. The servant here approved, shines in the improvement of his ten talents. The Lord takes notice of it all. Of their faithful offices it may be said, as well as of their persons, that none of them shall be lost; but the Lord will raise it up (to light and to remembrance) at the last day. He will have it so; for there was but little faithfully done for him in the world; and that, that was so, he will not forget. He has had but few real servants, though many pretenders to his house and family. It may be, few of the seeming great and pompous works of religion have been done seriously and sincerely for him. Many corrupt principles have founded monasteries, colleges, churches, hospitals and almshouses. A great many famous, splendid works will be lost at the fiery day. Many will appear such, as for which the authors have either already received their reward, or must expect no other, than the wages of sin. Nay, possibly, the good servants were not good in all their services, but must lose some at the day of fiery trial; as seems intimated in that of the apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 15. *If any man's works shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so, as by fire.* Since little has been well done, evangelically done for him, he designs that his faithful ones shall appear attended with all their faithful services. The *Gaiuses*, the *Henrys*, shall be illustrious in all that they have done faithfully, both to the brethren and to strangers. Also, wherein faithful service has been done, therein was dutiful, honourable regard paid to the Lord: it was done for his name's sake; out of love to him, and respect to his glory. And will he not consider what has been so done? Will not his love to himself and to his own name, engage him to remunerate such sacred regard to himself? Sure it will. *In that ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it unto me.* And *he is not unrighteous*, (or ungrateful,) *to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed to his name.* And then, he hath promised remuneration to each piece of faithful service. None of their labour to him and for him shall be in vain, or shall be thought to have been so, at the great day of account. Happy they, that come loaded with faithful services for the Redeemer! Happy (we must needs say) the three *Henrys* most nearly related, and last deceased! the present object and occasion of our grief, with both his parents. The *father* gave himself up to the active life, and was eminently skilful and faithful therein. The *mother* (as the son hath informed me) was as eminent in her place, as the father in his. The *son*, the present object and occasion of our grief, was (as is well known) *in labours more abundant.* Singular vessels of mercy here, of glory now, and especially at the great day of their joyful account!

9. The Lord Jesus means to commend his faithful servants at the day of his return: he will openly, solemnly commend them, at the day of their ac-

count. Angels, men, and devils shall be witnesses of the complacential suffrage and approbation that he will then give them. It shall appear how he loved them, how he was pleased in them and with them, when heaven and earth shall hear the loud, commendatory sentence, *Well done, good and faithful servants!*

We know not now the nature, the parts, the organs of a spiritual, glorified body; we know not what voice is among spirits, or how, without voice, they communicate their intentions and sentiments one to another. We know not how the spiritual body of the Redeemer, far transcendent to, and more glorious than, those of his saints, will differ from a spirit. We know not particularly, how his approbatory mind and good-will will be reported to them. It is sufficient to us, at present, that he will so represent to them his acceptance of them and their faithful services, as will amount to an abundant commendation, and to their abundant satisfaction, exultation, and joy. Our Lord, we may say, commends his servants now, in his intercession and advocacy for them; while he recommends them to his Father's favour, protection, and grace. This we may see in his last prayer for them, which seems to be the pattern and substance of his intercession above. Though in his converse with his disciples, he had had occasion enough to find fault with them, and to chide them for the dulness of their minds and earthiness of their apprehensions; for their unbelief and hardness of heart; the deficiencies of their love and courage, and readiness to forget his word and works; yet, when he is leaving the world, and willing to leave them, thereupon, to his Father's care, he has nothing but good to say of them; no mention of their faults; but—*They have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee;* and—*I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them,* (though they had received them at a slow rate,) *and have known surely, that I came out from thee; and they have believed that thou didst send me.* Endearing Lord! how good and kind is he, thus to make the best of his servants' case! And does he commend them now, and will he not do so when he comes again? That is the day of retaliation and reward! The day, in which he will be admired and glorified in his faithful ones. The day of account is the proper season for approbation; and that he will afford in and with an open commendation, *Well done, good and faithful servants!*

In the reason or reasonableness of this generous transaction of his, his public commendation of his faithful servants, we may satisfy ourselves by such considerations as these:

He will commend them, we may suppose,

1. For his Father's honour. From him they obtained mercy to be made and to be found faithful. His grace was displayed in leading them unto the Mediator, and confirming them in him: in leading them to him: *No man can come to me* (by reason of the predominant corruption of nature) *except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him.* As the Father sent him into the world, so, by potent persuasion, he draws disciples to him; and confirms them in him, and in a holy faithfulness to him. *Now, he which establishes us with you, in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God.* He pours on them the same unction as on the Redeemer; and so implants and enlivens them in him unto all fruitfulness. Their faithfulness honours him as the prime root and cause of it: and not only as such, but as the final cause, and ultimate end, of it. The Redeemer's servants were the Father's also: they were restored and returned unto the eternal God. As none came to the Father, but by the Son; so none come to the Son, but they come to the Father also. We come to him as Mediator; and coming to him in that office and notion, we come on purpose to be directed, led, and united by him unto the blessed God. The true worshippers, and those that are represented, by the apostle, as the object of his intercession, are styled, *Those that come to God by him. At that day,* says he, viz. when the divine Spirit shall be plenteously poured out, *ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you,* John xiv. 20. Ye shall be certified then, that as I act by the concurrence of the great God with me, so I conduct you to him, and join you with him. The faithful servants of the Lord Jesus, are the faithful servants of the eternal God. *All mine are thine.* They that belong to me, and are devoted to my name, are devoted to thine also. And where else, truly, are the servants of the eternal God to be found, but among the disciples of Jesus? We may talk of natural religion, but where is it to be found in the life and practice, but within the church of Christ? We may talk of moral virtue, but what an empty shadow is it, if not founded on the love of God? And where is that to be found, but among the servants of Jesus? It is he that opens to them the nature and excellences of the eternal God, the counsel, law, and love of the eternal God. It is he that calls them unto the worship and obedience of the eternal God; that, by his heavenly revelations and Spirit, kindles in their hearts the love of the eternal God. His servants then are, and must be, the servants of the eternal God. In being faithful to him, they have been faithful to God. In their faithfulness, they glorified God; and demonstrated thereby their true discipleship to him. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.* Having by their faithfulness glorified the eternal God, according to the law of discipleship to him, he will be ready (almost to thank, but sure) to commend them, when he comes again. *Well done, good and faithful servants!*

2. For his own honour. His grace has been disayed in their faithfulness. Without him they uld do nothing. He was the vine, from which eir life, their fruitfulness, and faithfulness was de-ved. He is the second *Adam;* and he appears, them, much more potent and successful than the st was. The first was, indeed, a living soul; but secured neither himself, nor his posterity: he on proved unfaithful, and entailed unfaithfulness on his race. The second *Adam* is a quickening pirit; not only continued faithful himself through-it the whole course of his obedience, but teaches id enables thousands to be faithful too; thousands old *Adam's* apostate race. He transferred them himself, ingrafted them into his vital body, shed uctifying virtue and Spirit upon them; in recount-ig the products of which, he may well, to his own raise, say to his faithful ones, *Well done, good and ithful servants!*

3. To manifest his approbation of their active, di-gent holiness. The righteous Lord loveth right-ousness, and hath promised to crown it at the last ay. By the same rule, that sin is offensive to him, bedience must be acceptable and grateful. He ectified their nature, that it might be capable of, nd intent upon, regular and sanctified operations. Ie purified his people, that they may be zealous of ood works: and when they are so, they answer a reat design of his redeeming, purifying grace. In heir holy faithfulness, they act most suitably to he original law of creation and integrity. They nost nobly employ the native powers bestowed ipon them; they act most rationally, spontane-ously, and agreeably to heaven-born spirits. Most *rationally.* Their pious faithfulness is dictated by he highest reason. They must needs serve him, hat served them to the death, served their chief nterests and eternal salvation. They see, that all other service, separate from his, is folly and mad-ness. They see, that time is short, the world is vanity, and death approaching: that it is his ser-vice, faithfully performed, will give them peace and satisfaction then. Most *spontaneously*, as the scales are dropped from their eyes, the ill bias and load is removed from the heart and will. They run the way of their Lord's commandments with an enlarged heart; and are sorry that they can run no better, and do no more. They gladly design and meditate the ways wherein they may serve him. Most *agreeably* to heaven-born spirits. As those that, in their first formation, came from the Father of spirits; and as those that have been anew created by him. They now show that they are re-turned to God, to his law and love. They please him, and are aspiring towards the enjoyment of him. To this, the Mediator called them; and this must be delightful to him. If the steps of moral virtue, and observance of the secondary table of the law, be pleasing to him, (as in the young man, whom, upon the assertion of such virtuous obser-vation from his youth, our Lord is said to love, Mark x. 21.) much more will the zealous exercise of his own sanctifying grace, in his faithful servants, be approved and commended by him. The exercise of their integrity and love, of their faith and faith-fulness, will be found to their praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ. There-in they have endeavoured to conform themselves to their Lord himself.

4. To vindicate them from the vile aspersions cast upon them by a blind, malicious world. Holy faithfulness has seldom here appeared in its true light and colour. The servants of God, and of his Christ, have, in all ages, had their abuses, re-proaches, and misrepresentations. Their innocence and integrity have been usually clouded and ob-scured. Thence, they have not been able to do the good they might and would, nor have been such an honour to their Lord and his cause as they should have been. They were not of the world, and so the world hated and reproached them. They were opposers of the devil's kingdom; and the devil hath found ways enough to vilify and blacken them, and make deluded miscreants believe, they were his complices and friends. Do any of them come in the severe, abstemious spirit of the re-former, John the Baptist; they are melancholy, or have a devil. Do they come in the familiar, soci-able mind and conduct of the Redeemer himself; they are then friends of publicans and sinners. An irreligious world will not be pleased with any of their deportment and conversation, as long as they walk according to the great rules and end of di-vine religion. In modern times they are loaded with the scandalous names of *heretics* and *hypo-crites;* of *schismatics*, *precisians*, and *fanatics:* and under such names they are sent to exiles and galleys, stakes and prisons. But he that knows their integrity, will bring forth their righteousness as the light; will vindicate his cause and them; will silence and confound all their impleaders, and particularly the great accuser of the brethren, by one public sentence of his, *Well done, good and faithful servants!*

5. They were his honour here. That little ho-nour that he had in and from this world of ours. As they were called and culled out of the world to be a people to his name, so they lived to the honour of his name. They were witnesses for him, for his truth, and office, and glory, in the several generations in which their lot was cast. On this account he recommends them to his Father's tuition, when he was leaving the world: *Thine are mine, and I am glorified in them*, John xvii. 10. They speak him, preach him, exemplify and commend him to an ignorant, unbelieving world, and in kind

retaliation, he will commend them at his return. *I say unto ye*, (and ye may depend upon my word for it,) that *whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man confess before the angels of God*, Luke xii. 8. Since, then, the name of the Lord Jesus was here glorified in them, they shall be glorified by him, and particularly receive the glory of a solemn acknowledgment and commendation from him, at the day of their account, and appearance before him.

6. To set them on admiring at his surprising condescension and love. Unutterable grace is to be poured out at that day. The Redeemer resolves to do every thing, by which he may be admired and glorified in his saints, at that astonishing day. And this shall be a piece of the wonder of the day, that he will take notice, approving notice, of such servants and such services. Such servants, that were in themselves so sinful and defective! sinful in nature, to their own continual shame and grief! so dark and destitute of spiritual light! so impenitent and hard-hearted! so unbelieving, remiss, and cold in their love, and grateful resentments of his goodness! Alas! they knew not how to bear themselves and their own hearts, while they were here. They were their own continual disease and burthen. So defective in what they did, and in the omissions of what they should have done. Had they done all that was required, they were, at best, but unprofitable servants. And will the Lord of life so kindly regard such impertinent ones as they? He needed them not. And how much did they omit of their duty? *Lord, forgive my sins of omission!* said the pious, famous *Usher*, when he came to die. How oft did the laziness of the flesh, the temptations of the world, the discouragements of the times, divert them from plain and excellent services! And then, how defective in those they wrought! And will he respect and recount such services as theirs? proceeding from such imperfect principles, and so darkly levelled at his glory? O the unspeakable goodness, and favour! Will he approve what they had forgotten, or what they thought would never have been forgiven? Surprising grace! This must needs overwhelm them with wonder, and set them upon the reflection and inquiry, when ever such works were done by them: *Lord, when saw we thee hungry, or naked, or in prison, and did so minister unto thee?* But he knows the times when, the persons to whom, the cases in which, they ministered, in all their services, to him. They are recorded, and shall be recounted at that day, to their surprise, and unconceivable amazement at his grace and love. With what rapturous astonishment will the strange but charming accents strike their souls, when the blessed Judge shall say, *Well done, good and faithful servants!*

7. To show to all, the reason of the difference he makes among the natives of this world at that day. Vast distinction he makes among them. Some he raises with such horrid, yet deathless bodies, as devils would have, were they to wear any. Them he sets at his left hand, frowns upon with utmost disdain and indignation, and then dooms to the region and flames designed and prepared for the implacable rebels against heaven, the devils themselves. Others he raises in honour, power, and glory; clothed with immortal bodies, glorious like his own. Them he sets at his right hand, the place of reputation and renown. Them he adjudges, not to the mansion of angels only, but to an endless blessedness with himself and his Father in their glory. In so doing, he acts not merely at a despotical, arbitrary rate; it is not the office of a judge to do so. For then he might as well confer this glory on the opposite black rank and company. But it is the function of a judge to do justice, to administer law, and put in execution the rules of government. However arbitrary our Lord may seem now in distributing his grace, to prepare persons for the honour of the day; *As he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy*; yet, then he appears as the righteous Judge. And as such, he must execute gospel sanction, and fulfil the threatenings and promises he himself hath made. He hath promised to his faithful ones the crown of life, and he will be sure to bestow it. Accordingly, he will find out all his faithful ones; will recount their faithful services; will let the world know that though they have no merit, they have done the work he commanded and approves; they have cleaved unto him and his service, when others would not; they are the persons to whom his promises of life and glory appertain; to whom, as righteous Judge, he is obliged to give the crown of righteousness; whom therefore in open court before men and angels, he must pronounce and commend as his good and faithful servants.

8. To cast (as we may well suppose) a tormenting reflection upon those refractory souls, that would not be faithful. They shall see what they have lost; what honour and approbation they have forfeited and fallen short of. O the dismal regret that will seize unfaithful souls at that day! They shall bethink themselves how they were invited and called unto like faithfulness. That the same crown of glory was proposed and promised unto them, as to others. The process of that day was opened to them: the honours of the faithful were set before them: the loss, the misery and shame, of unfaithful ones were sufficiently represented; but they would not believe, would not be faithful. They regarded not the honours that were to be adjourned till the last day. They loved the praise of men and approbation of the world. They would be of some note

ınd figure here, whatever became of eternal glory. And now they are debarred the Judge's commendation. Horror and confusion must seize them, while hey are separated from the good and faithful ;ompany, and excluded their applauses and joys. ) what unspeakable honour and dignity have they ost, and what eternal, blessed consequences there- ıpon !

9. To reflect a tacit honour upon faithful an- ;els. Consequentially, to approve and commend hem also. They will stand by; and their faith- ulness cannot but redound to their honour, in the lay when faithfulness is publicly commended. We cnow not that those unblemished spirits will be ›rought into judgment at that day. *Know ye not, hat we shall judge angels?* is usually and plausibly 'estrained to those that are confined in chains of larkness. Though it may, perhaps, be thought, hat there may be reason for a solemn judgment in 'eference to the one, as well as the other. Have he evil angels, since their fall, been continually ›pposing the Redeemer and his kingdom; the ›ious ones have, on the contrary, ever since their ;onservation, been diligently serving the Redeemer and his kingdom. Have the evil ones been the tempters and opposers of the saints, and so capable of being judged and condemned by them; the pious ones have been also their friends and ministers, and so as capable of being approved, thanked, and commended by them. But let us not be wise above what is written. Will the Mediator commend his faithful mortals? those that were so imperfectly and defectively faithful? What respect must he have for his perfectly faithful servants! They that always rejoiced in his commands, and never failed in the complete execution of them. While the saints of earth are commended, the commendation must ascend, and affect the saints of heaven; their consciences, in the mean time, will applaud them; and they rest assured of the Judge's good-will towards, and approbation of, them also. Saints on earth were faithful in few things. Their time was short. The saints of heaven (the natives there) were faithful in many things; faithful in the great *crisis*, when thousands of their brethren fell; faithful, each of them, through all ages of the world; faithful in all things. Commendation is much more due to them.

10. To cast shame and torture (as we may well suppose) on those angelical spirits, that refused to be faithful. Angelical spirits we may call them for distinction sake; though in refusing to be faithful, they refused to be angels; i. e. messengers and ministers to the heirs of God in the world. They soon renounced their allegiance, and faithfulness to their God and Creator. Yea, and some think to their Redeemer too; i. e. to the Son of God considered in the capacity of the Redeemer of this world. For it is apprehended by some divines, that the primitive sin of the angels lay here; it was discovered to them, that this world of ours would revolt and fall from God; that the blessed Son of God would put on human nature and accomplish our redemption; that this Redeemer (thus humanized, or incarnate) should be made head of men and angels; that by his redemption he should advance a great body of mankind to their seats, or seats superior to their own; that now, some of the angelical tribe acquiesced in this discovery of the divine counsel, comported with it, and secured their station and the divine favour; that others, in their pride disliked the method of the divine purpose, stomached the superior advancement of the human nature in the person of the Mediator, and so, were thrown down from their illustrious habitations. But however plausible this sentiment may, at first, appear, yet, upon maturer thoughts, it will appear attended with irrational or unsupportable consequence. For should it be revealed to the angels, in the state of their integrity, that this world would apostatize, it must be revealed also by whose means and seduction we should be induced so to apostatize; viz. by the seduction of angels antecedently apostatized. At least, the revelation of the Redeemer must represent to them out of whose hands we must be redeemed; viz. out of the hands of fallen angels; the seed of the woman must be supposed to bruise the serpent's head, and destroy the power and works of the devil. And should it be known to the angels, before they sinned, that they should sin, and be thrown down to horrid darkness, be trampled upon by the Redeemer, and tortured for ever, what a blast must that be to their happiness, what a beginning of despair, and desperate occasion of their sin and ruin! But in what instance and particular soever their sin was exerted, sinned, we know, they have, and fallen from their integrity and faithfulness. Faithful they would not be to their God, to the law of their creation and of the happy region where they dwelt. What sharp regret and envy will torment them, to see fallen mortals (such that were fallen by their instigation and inducement) raised to a noble degree of faithfulness to their Lord! to hear them commended by the Lord of life and death, from a resolved faithfulness to him in the midst of a perfidious world! yea, to hear them commended for their faithfulness in opposition to them and all their wiles and storms! These revolted spirits were here grieved and vexed, that any of our race were recovered out of their hands; were reconciled to heaven; and walked faithfully with their great reconciler. They did all they could to reduce them from their stedfastness. They laid snares, employed stratagems, and raised storms of persecution against them.

*The devil shall cast some of ye into prison, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. But be thou faithful unto death.* They would neither be faithful themselves, nor let others be so. And it may justly be determined that the faithful ones, that thus stood it out to the last against them, shall be solemnly commended in their hearing, for striking utmost shame and confusion into them. They see, with horror and despair, the glories they have lost. They see sinning mortals (such that were once so) raised to their happy seats. They see them received with joy, approved and applauded by the Judge; while themselves are hurled down to endless shame and contempt. O the direful lashes of their own conscience! O the reproach and disdain cast upon them by the great God, by the flaming Judge, by the faithful angels, and faithful saints! Away with such proud, rebellious, cursed miscreants, into the lake of inextinguishable fire!

Thus we see there may be reason enough, why the Lord Christ will publicly commend his faithful servants, when he comes again.

May this now prepare us for some application of this affecting truth. O that it may strongly affect our hearts! And may the application be taken in such inferences as these:

1. We see what a good Master the Son of God is. What condescension is here, not to admit only, or barely accept, but to commend such servants, such service! He knows very well what they are; he sees through their hearts; and sees all the corruption and corrupt principles there. And so, discerns well enough, how impure they are, and how imperfect their services; and might justly disdain them all. He is holy and jealous; his eyes are as a flame of fire. And the more holy and jealous he is, the more naturally and justly might he slight and abhor such servants. But here is an instance of gospel indulgence. He commends those whom he might condemn. Here is something more than mere pardoning grace. He does not only pass by their faults and follies, does not only forgive the iniquity of their holy things, but commends the work, applauds the service. Who dare say that he is an austere person, or a sour master? Can any one be more candid and generous? He knows the weakness, the failures, the defects of all the service offered him. He knows how indebted his servants are to him and to his grace; that without him they can do nothing, and yet he is resolved to commend them in the day of their account. O how happily deceived and disappointed will many of them be! They were continually poring on their sins, and thought that such as they should never be accepted. They were continually meditating the imperfection of their grace and holy principles, (if they could suppose they had any,) and could not believe that such blind, lame, cold services, could be pardoned, much less approved by their Judge. But be of good cheer, ye faithful ones! Your Judge is far better than you; and better than you can imagine. He remembers the work that you have forgot. Wherein or whereon ye are ready (and have reason in some respects) to say, or write, Ill done, he will say, Well done! What you have given up for lost, he has laid up for your joy. How will you be transported, when you shall hear him say of such as you, *Well done, good and faithful servants!* Admire his noble candour and generosity! ye are thus glorified in him and by him, according to the *grace* of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. The Lord Jesus will himself be faithful. He commends his servants for being so. And will he be defective in that, that he reckons, and declares before the world, to be their commendation? No, he cannot; so far as that can belong to him. And faithfulness does. He is the *faithful and true Witness.* Depend then upon his word and covenant. Rest assured of the infallible accomplishment of all his promises. Intrust him with your souls, your bodies, and all the affairs of your salvation. *Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it;* will do all that he hath called you to expect at his hands.

3. May it not seem strange, that he does not take more care to vindicate his servants here; to wipe off the reproaches and opprobrious reflections cast upon them? It would tend to his honour, as well as theirs. How is his glory eclipsed, while his servants lie under such clouds here! We are reckoned *as the off-scouring of all things*, (as the filth of the world,) says one of the most faithful of them. Will he commend them at last, and not commend now? or suffer them to lie under all manner of shame and ignominy? Let us take it as a piece of his mysterious providence.

4. See what honour awaits the Redeemer's servants at the day of his return. None of the applauses of the world may be set in the balance with his commendation. Not all the trophies, triumphal arches, or ensigns of honour, on the globe, can give the fame, that attends the breath of his approving lips. He can soon make your name ring through the heavens, assumed and shouted by angels there. Let his holy servants be content with their obscurity at present; content with the scandalous names and imputations now falsely affixed upon them. They are not fit for great honour and applause now. They know not how to bear it. When they are fit to bear it, they shall have it. When they are purged from all their pride and vanity; from all their self-conceit and self-assuming apprehensions, they shall have it in abundance. The King of saints will bring forth their names to open light, and fix it in the heavens. The Lamb that was slain, will make it appear, that their names were wrote in his adamantine book, before the foundation of the world. The prince of the kings of the

earth, the Judge of quick and dead, will bring forth all their exploits in religion, all their achievements for his cause, and in his service; will publish them before heaven and earth; will give the performers of them an *encomium* beseeming angels; and so, consecrate their name and memorial to eternity.

5. Is it not strange, that he will carry his servants to all this honour through all the obscurity of the grave? Will he commend them at last, but slay them now? Will he applaud them, when he comes again, but now lay their honour in the dust? What strange transaction is here? Must now the head and heart, that so faithfully served him, be lodged where they can praise him no more? Must the lips and tongue, that were so much our dear brother's glory, and with which he so faithfully glorified his Lord, be laid aside to crumble into dust? What sovereign determination is here? How easily could his pleased Lord despatch for him (as for *Elijah*) an angelical chariot to fetch him home, as a presage of future applause! If the minister and ministration of and under the law were so glorious, should not the minister and ministration of the gospel be much more so? But we see that heavenly treasure is committed to earthen vessels; that the vessels must be broken, in order to be re-framed, and fitted for glory. We see, that mysterious counsel governs the world.

6. Where is the belief of this great report? a report, that should vividly strike the power of our souls? Where is the faith, that is due thereto? Will the Redeemer commend his servants, at the end of the day, at the end of the world; what work would this believed make upon our minds! What a turn would it give to our souls, and all their faculties! It would awaken the drowsy and lethargic; rouse the negligent and remiss; warm the frozen and benumbed; resolve the slow deliberator; invigorate and inspirit the fearful and discouraged; confirm and cherish the faithful servant; and instil new life and strength to all. Is so grand encouragement set before us? the Lord pardon and cure our unbelief!

7. Will our Lord commend his faithful servants, and will he take it ill, if we do so too? Nay, does he not expect we should? Must we esteem them highly in our own minds, and may we not tell our estimation to others? Sure we may. And that for the same reason for which he commends them, and for which he would have so much of the lives and acts of his faithful ones recorded in his own book, the New Testament; the honour of his own name and grace in them. They therefore have done good service, that have portrayed the holy lives and transactions of his zealous servants, and transmitted them to posterity. The lights of the world should be set up to be seen. The epistles of Christ should be read of all men. But who shall speak the excellences, the faithfulness of that servant, whose departure occasions this day's sorrow and solemnity? It is a subject quite too big for me. I cannot satisfy myself (much less you, who knew him longer, and knew him more) in any representation I can make of his natural endowments, acquired ornaments, or sacred dispositions and virtues. I must leave it to some one better instructed, (and more akin to himself,) to tell you the largeness of his mind, and of his heart. To tell you the strange readiness and fertility of his invention on any subject, to which he, at any time, applied his thought; the faithfulness of his memory amidst various studies and perusals; the solidity of his judgment both in secular and divine affairs. To tell you the various parts of learning into which he travelled, particularly languages and law. To tell you the sweetness of his disposition, in modesty and meekness, affability, candour, and love; and to tell you how all these were sanctified and consecrated by divine grace. Faith and love, you might see, instigated to such unwearied labours. You knew something of his eminent piety and devotedness unto God. His life was like a continued scene of actual devotion; continually employed (besides the necessary repasts and converses of life) in prayer, exposition of Scripture, singing of psalms, instructing of catechumens, preaching the words of life, or meditating something for the service of his Lord and the benefit of souls, to be communicated from the pulpit or the press. And all this was done with such spontaneity and cheerfulness, as if he would regularly prove the truth of the title of a discourse, (which he told some of us was in the press, and which, now, must be the last he will send thither,) the *Pleasure* or *Pleasantness of Religion*. The abundance of his public labours you pretty well know; instant in season, and out of season (if such work could be so). The excellency of the subjects he treated on; the sweetness and spirituality of his management of them; the seriousness and affection of his spirit in treating with you by them, you have often seen and experienced. His compassion and liberality to the poor and indigent: his extensive charity and love to all Christians, under their relation to their common Lord, and common character as saints: his sincere affection encouraging respect to his brethren in ministerial bonds, you cannot be altogether unacquainted with. His exemplary duty and faithfulness in his various relations, as son, (that was a crown to his parents,) husband, father, master, and pastor, (first at *Chester*, and afterward at *Hackney*,) may not now be insisted on. These many and more great things belonging to him, it is to be hoped, will, in due time, be reported to you. His singular acquaintance with holy writ, his dexterity in making it familiar and useful to meanest capacities, as well as to others, will, in his expositions, be published to the world, as

long as time shall last, or the *English* language live. Happy man, that was touched with lethargic symptom but one day, or part of a day, while it is the chronical disease of our lives! So ill could his zealous constitution comport with that drowsy disorder, that, next morning betimes, he withdrew from it, and retired into that lucid, perfect world, where alone uninterrupted, sacred activity and unweariness concur together. In one thing mercifully disappointed; whereas he expected to be ground to the dust by the *stone*, or dissolved by the *diabetes;* from the time of his last sermon (on the Monday here) he slumbered away without sickness or pain, (as he usually confessed, when asked how he did,) till the next morning, that he fell fast asleep in his blessed Master's arms. Happy servant, that had said and done so much in the proper season of life and health, that he had nothing to say or do, when he came to die, but silently retire to bed, and enter into his Master's joy! Yet, being dead, he loudly speaks. Speaks the monitory words he last insisted on at his beloved *Chester*, *Let us fear! Let us fear, lest a promise being left us* (or, lest the promise being left, or deserted by us) *of entering into rest, any of you should seem to come short of it!* Prophetical, sure, in the choice of the last words he was allowed to preach upon; the last opened to you in this place, in this pulpit; *Surely I have heard* Ephraim *bemoaning himself*; when, the next day, all the country was in tears, and true *Israelites* were bemoaning themselves for loss of him. O what a friend have we, has the church of God, yea, the whole world, lost! The *chariots* of *Israel!* the *horsemen* thereof! In him we have, particularly, lost the sixth volume of Expositions on Scripture; (unless any *apparatus* be found, that will assist some competent hand to send it forth;) a seventh volume, that was to be critical on difficult places of Scripture; and an eighth, that was to be a body of divinity, in sermons; besides what other he would have occasionally sent into the world: these I know he intended. O let us bemoan the sins that have forfeited this light, and procured this loss! But this loss to us is gain to him. To be with Christ above is far better, in respect to his own felicity, than to be serving him here below. With what joy must such a servant be received into the heavenly regions! What solace and delight must overflow his active soul at the great day of his joyful account, (joyful, as concerning himself, however it be concerning you,) when his great Master shall receive him with these loud accents, (containing a character above all that flesh can say,) *Well done, thou good and faithful servant!* And this I speak with the more confidence, (for I would dread being swayed by party prejudice, especially in matters of such moment,) as being persuaded that not you only, but all the pious of all persuasions, that had opportunity of being acquainted with him, with his spirit, life, and labours, unanimously concur in this sentiment, that this must be his entertainment by his Judge at the great day, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant!* And since there will be subordinate judges too, those that approve and applaud the determination of him that is supreme; we may well suppose, that *Chester*, *Cheshire*, *Lancashire*, *Shropshire*, *Hackney*, *London*, and other places, will bring in their verdict, and add their concurrent suffrage to the Judge's sentence, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant!* Yea, shall the *stone cry out of the wall*, and the *beam out of the timber answer it*, against the wicked and perfidious; and must we not say, that the walls of his own house, and particularly of his study therein, the pulpit, and the press, will all be ready to resound and echo to the Judge's applauding accents, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant!*

8. What a provocation and incentive, now, is here to holy faithfulness! Be faithful, brethren, to the Son of God! His commendation will be your sufficient reward. Are you ambitious? It is incident to polite, refined minds, so to be. Here is a mark for your highest ambition. Covet the approbation, the applause, of the great Judge of the world. One commending word from his lips will secure your glory and renown for ever. One word of his will confound every accuser. Will cancel or prevent any condemnation from sin, or the world; from conscience or the devil. One such word of his will recommend you unto the most august, angelical spirits, and fix you in their favour and company for ever. Yea, it will recommend you to the eternal God, to his complacency and endless communion; you will, thereupon, be immediately presented before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. This sentence, *then* pronounced, will be sufficient retribution to our dear brother for all his work of faith and labour of love. It would now be epitaph for him, long and large enough, as good and as great as he was, supposing it spoken by those sovereign lips, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant!* Do not the accents charm your ears, and dissolve the heart, and instigate you to a holy, ambitious aspiration after them? Is the faithful servant thus commended? Have ye had such a wonderful example of sacred faithfulness before your eyes; *Go ye, and do likewise.* Be faithful (brethren) to the Redeemer, to his interests and kingdom in the world. Be faithful to the ministry ye have received, to the souls he hath redeemed, to the vocation wherewith ye have been called, to your light, and numerous talents and obligations: and when the opener of the graves shall come, the arbitrator of life and death shall appear in the clouds, he will make the heavens ring with your praise and applauses: *Well done, ye good and faithful servants! Amen*, and *Amen.*

# A FUNERAL SERMON

PREACHED AT HACKNEY, JUNE 27TH, 1714,

ON OCCASION OF THE

# DEATH OF THE REVEREND MATTHEW HENRY,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

BY DANIEL WILLIAMS, D. D.

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## TO MRS. HENRY,

LATE WIFE OF THE

REV. MR. HENRY.

MADAM,

At the desire of your relations I submitted to make nown to you the sad and unexpected news of the eath of your late husband. The surprise of that fflictive stroke made this to me a very difficult ndertaking.

On the following day you were pleased, by several orthy gentlemen of Hackney, to request that I ould preach there a funeral sermon on the next ay; the honour I had for the dead, and for you his :lict, conquered my backwardness to such a per-rmance upon one day's warning. Your circum-ances not admitting you to appear so soon in ublic, I was willing to send you what I had elivered, with some additions of what I formerly reached on the same text. I heartily wish, that hat I have said of the deceased may contribute to our comfort, and conduct too. What I collected om the text, will show you not only your duty, but iat the happiness of saints is secure under all the :currences of life and death. The surest mercies are ispensed in both. You have a great charge upon ou; viz. the education of many of the children of father so near to God. But you have also much encourage your endeavours; they are dedicated to od, the pains taken with the capable have well icceeded, the rest are hopeful; many prayers for iem are recorded in heaven, they are children of ie covenant, and of one well beloved by God and good men; he has left many printed instructions for your assistance, which they will be apt to regard; and above all, you may, you ought, in all your good attempts, and in every pressing difficulty, to look to and depend upon the Almighty God, as the *Husband of the widow, and Father of the fatherless.* May you find constant tokens of his fulness, truth, and favour, and from him receive comforts by all your remaining mercies! I am

Your sympathizing brother,
And faithful servant,
DANIEL WILLIAMS.

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ROMANS xiv. 8.

*For whether we live, we live to the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

THE scope of this chapter is to maintain peace, and urge moderation, among Christians, notwithstanding their different sentiments and practices in rituals and other matters, wherein the essentials of faith and godliness were unconcerned. The *text* assigneth a convincing reason, why a charitable opinion of each other should obtain, although such differences remained; *q. d.* both parties are the Lord's in life and death, both parties live and die unto the Lord, and therefore they should neither despise nor censure one another; *i. e.* they are subject to the dominion and judgment of the Lord as their sole *Proprietor*, they are also received and accepted by him as devoted saints, and as such they serve him according to their *different* sentiments. It must

then be unjust usurpation, and dangerous uncharitableness, to condemn such because of some inequality in their degrees of light. But more of this afterwards.

Observe, I. Sincere believers are the Lord's in life and in death.

Jesus Christ is the Lord, for, v. 9. it immediately follows, For to this end *Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

Life here expresseth man's present state, and connotes all the time, endowments, abilities, interest, opportunities for improvements and service, with every talent possessed by us in this life.

Death puts a period to this present life by a separation of the soul from the body. Upon death the immortal soul passeth safely into the unseen state; which state is also referred to, because the interest of Christ in his saints is not interrupted by death, and his dominion is over the inhabitants of that world of spirits.

Christ is indeed Lord of all men, as truly as of believers; *All being created for him and by him*, they owe to him obedience in life, and must abide his judgment after death. *All must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.*[a] But sincere Christians are the Lord's in a more peculiar sense; for they were assigned to him by the Father, *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.* They are his by *special* redemption. He also *apprehended*[b] them by effectual calling, whereby they dedicated themselves to Christ, and by mutual *covenant* they further became his own; *They are for him, and not for another.*[c] Upon such accounts it is justly said to all believers, *You are Christ's;*[d] nor is it a small part of their privilege that they can say, *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine.*[e]

Quest. 1. What is intended by a Christian's being the Lord's in life?

Ans. 1. He alone has authority to rule them, especially in what concerns religion. His will ought to be a rule to them; whatever power others can claim over them must be subordinate to his, and by delegation from him. He is *Head* of the church, to govern, as well as influence, his members.[f] His propriety is of that sort as to be a foundation of such an absolute dominion, as admits no challenge or excuse. All his laws bind the conscience immediately; nor can any person dispense with, or authority control, them. Our Lord has reserved to himself to appoint officers in his church, sacraments, qualifications of ministers, and terms of communion, &c. To add to these is to usurp his rights; to alter or refuse these is rebellion against his crown and dignity.

Ans. 2. They are his to use and dispose of them whilst they live. Shall not he do *what he will with his own?* His justice and wisdom will preserve the rules of equity in disposing of them, and yet he is so true to his own rights, as to claim the disposal of all our circumstances, and the appointing how our time and talents shall be employed. It is an unjust denial of his propriety to murmur at the *work* he ordains, be it never so mean or difficult. His title to his people is such as to serve his purposes by their health or sickness, prosperous or low estate, higher or lower station; they are not to choose or dispute. The interest of our Lord in us authorizeth him to effect his own ends by us, and by all that is ours, as his wisdom shall direct. Nor is this to be in some cases, but in all; or at some certain times, but as long as life endureth.

Ans. 3. The Lord is sure to be concerned for their good in all the occurrences of life.

The vicissitudes, wants, and dangers in this present life are many; the Lord's people are exposed in this world to more distresses than others, because of their fidelity to him; but as their being his brings on them the hatred of the wicked, so the same thing is their security and relief under all their troubles. He oft, on this account, restrains their enemies, saying, *Touch not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm.*[g] They find cause to say, We which live are delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, *that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal bodies.*[h] He who saith, He is worse than an infidel who provides not for his own, cannot neglect to provide for his own, the care of whom he has undertaken when they became his: they are not sent to war at their own charges.[i] His *eye* guides them in the way he orders them to go; by *his strength* they are enabled to perform what he enjoins. *His consolations* abound with their troubles. When weak, he *carrieth his lambs in his arms.*[k] When they go astray, he brings them back as his own sheep; and will say, *Of them whom thou hast given me, I have lost none.*[l] Their whole life shall evidence the truth of that place; *He will be our guide, even unto death.*[m]

Quest. 2. What is it to be the Lord's in death, or dying?

Ans. 1. The time and the manner of a believer's death are in his hand.

He *has the keys of hell and death.*[n] His saints shall not die when their enemies please, but when he thinks it most for his glory, best for his servants, and in the fittest time. The weakest shall live as long as he has work for them; and commonly they who have been very useful, are taken away before a longer life shall prove dishonourable, useless, or intolerable to them. It belongs also to him to prescribe, whether the death of his servants shall be

a 2 Cor. v. 10. b Phil. iii. 12. c Ezek. xvi. 8. d 1 Cor. iii. 23. e Cant. vi. 3. f Eph. v. 23. g Ps. cv. 15.

h 2 Cor. iv. 11. i 1 Cor. ix. 7. k Isa. xl. 11. l John xviii. 9. m Ps. xlviii. 14. n Rev. i. 18.

dden or slow, easy or painful, natural or violent, youth or age, by what disease, and by what means y shall die. He has ends worthy of himself in this variety; and what is so equal, as that those ds should be subserved by such as are his own? ter had no cause of repining, when Christ *signi- d to him by what death he should glorify* God, though was to be a violent death; and he asserts his ht to determine of such matters; when *Peter* ked, Lord, *what shall this man do? i. e.* Shall *John*, y beloved, die as I must? Christ replies, *If I will t he tarry till I come, what is that to thee; follow u me.*[o]

Ans. 2. When believers die, they are *to appear fore the judgment-seat of Christ.*[p]

He alone has a right to judge them. By his ntence their state will be determined, and not by e censures of men; or their own mistaken opinion themselves. His own *gospel will be the rule of dgment;*[q] the great and convincing *witness*, will be s omniscient mind, to which the gracious *secrets their hearts* were known; *viz.* their good desires, solves, contrivances, affections, and governing ms; these are better than what appeared oft, in eir actions and attainments. It is the same all- eing eye which observed those *prayers, fasts, and aritable works,*[r] which they concealed from the orld, to avoid ostentation, and to approve them- lves to him as satisfied with his sole approbation.

Ans. 3. *Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the ath of his saints.*[s]

He who bottles their *tears*, cannot be prodigal of eir *blood*, for it is *precious in his sight;*[t] it shall ot be spilled but for valuable ends; as to attest s truth, and be the seed of his church; and they all pay dear who are guilty of shedding the least op of it. So the cry of this brought utter ruin on *Rome pagan.* And in revenge, shall *Rome pal* have *blood to drink*, because she was *drunk ith the blood of the saints.*[u] She may shortly boast ose wounds are healed, which she received by the ord of Christ's mouth, but she will, after a short iumph, find her plagues *shall come in one day, and e be utterly burnt with fire; for strong is the Lord od who judgeth her;*[v] though the protestants will be o much reduced to effect it.

Ans. 4. When dying, and when dead, he will deal ith them as his own.

The *sting*[w] of death he will take away by an sured pardon, and full absolution. He sets them ove its *terrors*, by a firm persuasion that he over- me death, to deliver them from the fear of it;[x] id by some foresight and foretastes of that good hich follows their release. To render them *meet* for the upper world, their souls shall be set free from all that is carnal and earthly, by their separation from the body; and the divine principle alone reigning in all its faculties, his angels[y] shall guide and defend the departed souls through the upper regions, till they arrive to the place of the blessed, where Christ will receive them to himself; to possess the *mansions*[z] he has prepared, and enjoy that perfect light, love, life, glory, and delights, which he purchased for, and becomes the *members* of such a head. *Them he will bring to appear with him in his glory,*[a] when he comes to judge the world. Their *bodies* shall his Spirit raise,[b] as the bond of union betwixt him and them, which death could not dissolve; those bodies he will frame to that spirituality, as shall suit the heavenly regions, and the employment of exalted souls. These bodies will not only be freed from all blemishes, pains, weakness, listlessness, and weariness, but made like unto Christ's glorious body,[c] then their whole persons are solemnly absolved and vindicated, *and Christ is glorified and admired in them*, upon which they ascend, and *be ever with the Lord*, to be perfectly happy in a full conformity to Christ, and the beatific vision.

*Exhortation.* Be all of you persuaded to become the Lord's, by a sincere dedication of yourselves to him.

Acknowledge that right he has to each of you; at the judgment-seat of Christ, *every tongue shall confess to* God,[d] i. e. to Christ, who is God, unless Isa. xlv. 23. be spoke of some others besides the true God. If you are among those who are devoted to Christ, you will confess as they, *v.* 24, 25. *In the Lord we have righteousness and strength, in him we glory;* but if unbelievers, you shall be *ashamed* that you were so *incensed* against him, as to deny to come and yield up yourselves to him; this you shall confess to be injustice towards him, and destructive to yourselves. He now puts in his claim, that by your consent you may become his for your own benefit. *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God,*[e] was what better became the *devils* to say, than you; for he invites you; your salvation depends on him entirely; and it is possible to be obtained for his sake; nay, it is certain to all, who will yield up themselves to their blessed Lord.

Motive 1. For *this end he died and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord of the dead and living.*[f]

He has not only a claim to you as your *Creator*,[g] but as your Redeemer too. You are bought with a price, and that no less than his precious blood; to offer up yourselves to him, is your reasonable service;[h] he might well expect, when bleeding on the cross, that he *should draw all men to him;*[i] for what ene-

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o John xxi. 19—22. p Rom. xiv. 10. q Rom. ii. 16
r Matt. vi. 4, 5, 18. s Ps. cxvi. 15. t Ps. lxxii. 14.
u Rev. xvii. 6. v Rev. xviii. 7, 8. w 1 Cor. xv. 55.
x Heb. ii. 14, 15. y Luke xvi. 22.

z John xiv. 2, 3. a 1 Thess. iv. 14. b Rom. viii. 11.
c Phil. iii. 21. d Rom. xiv. 10, 11. e Matt. viii. 29.
f Rom. xiv. 9. g 2 Pet. ii. 1.
h Rom. xii. 1. i John xii. 32.

mies could be so unconquered by his love, as rather die by their wounds than come to him to be healed? He merited a propriety in you by his death; he is *risen*, and entereth his claim; he is *alive*, to observe how it is received, and has *all power in heaven and earth*, to avenge himself on such as reject him, as well as to confer all his blessings on those who accept his offer, by dedicating themselves to him. O bethink you, whose are you, if you be not the Lord's? it is an usurper, even the devil, who possesseth you.

Motive 2. You comply not with the chief design of the gospel, unless you become the Lord's.

The gospel is an invitation of sinners to Christ; and all that is recorded therein, tends to incline men to be the Lord's. What is historically declared of Christ, the account given of the Spirit's operations, the promises, and threatenings, all concur to prevail with men to yield up themselves to him. What is mentioned of the evil of sin, the misery of sinners, the dangers, weakness, and emptiness of self, the vanity of the world, the wiles and cruelty of devils; all this is to bring us to *renounce* these, as competitors with Christ for our affections and choice.

No minister can think his labours are effectual, till he can say, *I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin to Christ.*[k] All the authority of the gospel, all its directions, all its allurements, encouragements, and helps, are not only *in vain* to such as refuse to be the Lord's, but they will *aggravate* their condemnation, and expose them to the *sorer* punishments. This Jesus *will come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them who obey not the gospel.*[l] Flatter not yourselves by any impressions the word has made upon you, or by the hopes you have gathered from it; for unless it has prevailed with you to give your hearty consent to be the Lord's, it has had no saving effects upon you. That is its chief intention, for that it is adapted, and its design is not fully answered, till every *thought and imagination be brought to obedience to Christ.*[m]

Motive 3. To be the Lord's, includes the highest honour and felicity.

The godly are pleased with the title of being his *servants*, and oft mention it as their honour. But if you will be the Lord's, you shall not only be his servants, but his *peculiar people*, his *friends* and *favourites*, his *brethren, joint heirs with him, his temple, his spouse, the members of his body, and his heritage.*[n] Our Lord Jesus declares all these concerning every true believer. He fills up every relation to the extent of it; and must you not admire his condescending goodness, in inviting such as you into such relations. What honour, what safety, what power, what riches, what happiness, must any *one* of these contain! what then must all of them together include? To be his, that is, to be his in all these respects, connotes a happiness not to be expressed by fewer terms. Look back to what I have said of the Lord's concern for his in life; how precious their death is to him, and how he deals with them dying and dead; and will you not find *cords* fit to draw you to him, or enough to convince you what enemies you must be to yourselves, as well as to him, as long as it is your resolve, *We will not come unto thee.* I reserve another exhortation, as proper to the next head, as well as to this.

Observe, II. All true believers evidence their being the Lord's by living and dying to him.

This is the *duty* of every man, but it is the peculiar *character* of saints, they live and die to the Lord; it is the best and most undoubted evidence of their being the Lord's that they can give: nor will it be proved by any thing without this. All saving acts suppose our being the Lord's, and are comprehended in *living and dying to him.*

Self is excluded in both, *v. 7. None of us liveth to himself, no man dieth to himself.* Self is the great rival with Christ, and therefore to *deny ourselves*[o] is made one of the first conditions of men's becoming the disciples of Christ. Man by his apostasy set up carnal self as his chief end, and supreme ruler; his own humour, his own will, his own honour, yea, *his belly, are to him his God.* Therefore till self be renounced we cannot become the Lord's, nor live or die to him.

Quest. 1. Wherein do believers live unto the Lord?

Ans. 1. In general they live to the Lord, when throughout their lives they act for Christ and towards him, as they who *are his in life.* The course and tenor of their lives must express a true acknowledgment of his propriety in their persons and all their endowments; and this not by starts, but as the scope of their lives; not for a short time at first, but as long as life shall continue. St. *Paul* sums it up in these words, *To me to live is Christ.*[q] More particularly,

(1.) They live and act in subjection to his authority as their Lord. You heard that the Lord has the supreme right to govern them; this believers confess, by their obediential regards to him; they walk as he commandeth them; and *put away none of his statutes from them.*[r] What he prohibits they forbear, what he enjoineth they account themselves obliged to perform, and to exercise sincere repentance, when they fail in either of these. Their solicitous inquiry is, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*[s] This they impartially study, with a sincere purpose to observe it against all the motions of their lusts, and without respect to their secular interests. His word they esteem a sufficient warrant, though

k 2 Cor. xi. 2. l 2 Thess. i. 8. m 2 Cor. x. 5.
n Rom. viii. 17. o Matt. xvi. 24.
p Phil. iii. 19. q Phil. i. 21.
r Ps. xviii. 22. s Acts ix. 6.

many censure them; nor can the greatest powers make them forbear to do what the Lord enjoins, or comply with usages he has not warranted them to impose; for they are at a point,[t] whether they shall obey the almighty God, or feeble mortals. If men assume to prescribe rules in matters the Lord hath reserved to himself, they dare not follow them; but from a loyal regard to him, they reject all human inventions in the worship of God, and sacred ministrations of his house.

(2.) They live to his glory, as their great end.

The glory of Christ is their *governing end;* this they propose in their undertakings; they contrive and pursue the best means to exalt his name,[u] and carefully avoid what would be a dishonour to him. So he be glorified by what they do, they are contented to want the praise of it, yea, to be despised; and therefore are most solicitous after considerable performances, to observe whether Christ is exalted thereby, and not how they are applauded. As the Lord is greatest in their eye, so they contribute what they can to render him excellent in the esteem of others, and are grieved when any treat his name, his word, or his image, with contempt.

To him they ascribe the praise of all their gifts and graces, and of all their benefits and blessings; whenever they find any good effect of their labours, they humbly confess, that herein *Christ has wrought with me; and glory through Christ Jesus, in those things which pertain to God.*[v] Believers strive to be what they account the highest character a man is capable of, viz. *the glory of Christ.*[w] Not that they think they can make him more glorious in *himself*, but they desire his own glory may *shine* forth in more illustrious instances, and that they may discern it as far as he is pleased to manifest it, and may discover it to others in all the ways he has appointed for that purpose; and among the rest, that his perfections may, as in a mirror, shine forth in their Christian temper, labours, and behaviour. What pleasure was it to the apostle to be assured, *Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.*[x]

(3.) They serve his interest with faithfulness and diligence, as the chief business of life. They impartially desire to know it, they heartily espouse it as a *trust* committed to them; it is just and honourable in their judgment, even when despised and condemned by the great and learned. This lies near their heart, as their great concern, whoever are unconcerned. They dare not deny or betray it, whatever hardships they are exposed to by their faithful adherence; nor will they neglect it even when the defence and propagation of it require the greatest application of mind, the hardest labours, the largest expense, the severest self-denial, and very manifest peril of both losing the best friends, and undergoing the wrath of the most powerful enemies.

Such as are his owe him all service. The *angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, stood by me.*[y] Not to serve him at all times, and in all things, directly or indirectly, is defrauding him of his right. But though in all acts of obedience in every station, and doing what prepares us for his service, we *are serving the Lord,*[z] and especially in all acts of religious worship, nevertheless an eminent part of this service consists in being witnesses and agents for him in the world.[a] If we neglect this, we live not to him but to ourselves.

The interest of our Lord is too glorious to make us ashamed, afraid, or backward to promote it to our utmost; for the design he is carrying on, and the purposes to be served by us, are what become his wisdom, holiness, and goodness, and they are conducive to the good of men, as well as glorious to himself. If you ask, What of this kind is it wherein you must be active? I answer, You must resist sin and destroy the works of the devil, as far as your station admits; with all your might *promote* reformation of manners, the welfare of mankind, the purity of worship, a godly discipline, the conversion of sinners, the edification and comfort of saints, and peace among all such as call on the name of the Lord. Again, *propagate* the gospel for the knowledge of Christ, and the salvation of sinners, and defend the faith of the gospel against popery and all damnable errors. In a word, enlarge and advance the kingdom of our dear Lord to the extent of your ability.

(4.) They approve themselves to him, and study to please him from day to day. They are under the influence of that rule, *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.*[b] They appeal to him for their sincerity, when censured; they are satisfied with his approbation of what they perform, and are not free from doubts of the truth of their graces, till they can appeal to him as St. *Peter*, *Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.*[c]

The same care they *take to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing;*[d] they avoid what may grieve his Holy Spirit, who is their only Comforter. They are ready to communicate to his necessitous ministers, and relieve his poor, for *with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*[e] Every duty and good work they endeavour to perform *acceptably to God,*[f] and to stand on good terms with him, whoever are displeased; as knowing, if *they pleased men they should not be the servants of Christ,*[g] for he justly claimeth, that our doctrine and actions should not be directed

t Acts v. 29. u 2 Cor. viii. 19. v Rom. xv. 17, 18.
w 2 Cor. viii. 23. x Phil. i. 20. y Acts xxvii. 23.
z Col. iii. 24. a 1 Thess. ii. 19.

b Col. iii. 23. c John xxi. 17.
d Col. i. 10. e Phil. iv. 18. Heb. xiii. 16.
f Heb. xii. 18. g Gal. i. 10.

to be acceptable to men, further than as they please him, by a conformity to his declared will. And this is wisdom for ourselves; for he hath the disposal of all that concerns our welfare in both worlds.

(5.) They are well contented with his disposal of all the circumstances of life.

They refer themselves to him to choose their lot, and acquiesce fully in his determination, as persuaded he knows what is best for *them*, and most conducive to his own blessed purposes; to subserve which they are devoted, and every way obliged. They *have learnt in every state to be content*.[h] What condition, work, and station he appoints, they submit to without repining; and labour to accommodate themselves to it, so as to answer the ends of God in that disposition of their affairs. It is their care to improve the advantages, watch against the temptations, perform the duties, and exercise the graces, proper and peculiar to that condition wherein they are placed. They dare not attempt a change of their station, but under his conduct; and are more solicitous to acquit themselves well in a present mean condition, than to get it altered. If sickness, poverty, afflictive relations, or reproach, be their trial, by the hand of an *unoffended God*, every word of his supports them. If they are culpably accessories, they submissively accept their *punishment*, and rest not till a pardon frees them from guilt, which is the bitterest part of their exercise.

But the worst things that they endure for the Lord's *sake*,[i] they can glory and rejoice in, as what will work for their good in this life, and add an exceeding weight of glory in the life to come.[k]

(6.) They labour to clear their interest in him, and to grow up into him, as the greatest end of life next to the glory of God.

All believers have a covenant interest in Christ, but many of them doubt about it: they who have some good hope, want a full assurance; they who have this, enjoy it not alway. The most blessed comfort, next to a saving interest in Christ, is an uninterrupted full assurance of it. This they, who live to the Lord, strive to obtain, by an exact walk, eminent service, willingly suffering for the cause of Christ, constant, intimate communion with God, growth in grace; and by the lively actings of love to Christ, and of faith in him, and in the gospel constitution and promises. This is what *Paul* was so intent upon, *to be found in Christ, and to win Christ*.[l] He had an interest in him, he had accounted *all as loss for him*; yea, he had attained assurance, *for he rejoiced in him*. What then he was still intent upon, and pursued, is either a constant assurance well established, and more strengthened, or a further growth into Christ, with a fuller conformity to him, or *both*.

All believers are *in Christ; Christ in them, by his* Spirit and image, *is the hope of glory*.[m] They are all *new creatures*, but some are weak, others stronger; all have some degree of conformity to Christ, but some have less of his image, Spirit, life, and power; others have more. But they who have *most* of these, are still pressing after further degrees. *They forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those things that are before*.[n] They would grow up into him in *all things* which is the head, even Christ; they propose no less than to come to a *perfect man*,[o] unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. For this they pray, and go from one ordinance to another. They endeavour to derive more virtue from Christ; they desire the most transforming sight of him, that they may be *changed from glory to glory*.[p] They thirst for such communications, as that they may find *all* of Christ's image, in the *whole* of them.

Thus I have shown what it is to live to the Lord. All believers do live thus in some measure: to come up to the full of it is our duty, and happiest are they who come nearest to this description.

Quest. 2. In what respect do believers die to the Lord?

Ans. 1. They are resigned to him as to the time and way of dying. They will *wait till their change come*,[q] how bitter soever their lives may be; and with *Simeon*,[r] receive God's *dismission* and *release*, before they die. But when he sends the message of death, they receive it, whatever age they are of, and dare not fret at the manner or means by which God will have them die. How composedly does St. *Peter* speak of his approaching death, *Knowing that shortly I must put off my tabernacle, even as the Lord Jesus has showed me*.[s] Was this to be by an easy or natural death? No. Christ had showed him, that he should be *bound*,[t] and forced to *die on a cross*, which was a shameful, painful death.

Ans. 2. They willingly die for the Lord's name and cause, when he calls them to it.

Every believer is a *martyr* in purpose and resolution. The Lord is pleased to call some out to resist unto *blood*, and sacrifice their lives in the honour of his name. Such *loved not their lives unto the death*.[u] Innumerable are the witnesses, whose blood was shed by heathen and popish idolaters. And still there remain many, who say, in the strength of Christ, *Neither bonds nor afflictions move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy*.[v] A life is justly and profitably laid out by dying for Christ.

Ans. 3. They apply themselves to him as their *Judge*, upon the approach of death.

When we see death before our eyes, we know we are near the judgment-seat of Christ, (or what is

h Phil. iv. 12. i Rom. viii. 36. k 2 Cor. iv. 17. l Phil. iii. 7, 8. m Col. i. 27. n Phil. iii. 13. o Eph. iv. 13, 15.

p 2 Cor iii. 18. q Job xiv. 14. r Luke ii. 29. s 1 Pet. i. 14 t John xxi. 18. u Rev. xii. 11. v Acts xx. 24.

equivalent) the sentence we must expect from his mouth, which shall determine our state for ever, for he is to be our Judge. The favourable opinion, or rash censures, of men, signify nothing; nay, our own apprehensions and sentence will not be decisive in this important case; but *he that judgeth me is the Lord*,[w] therefore believers apply to him, that he would prepare them, that he would undertake their cause as their advocate, as well as judge; and that he would so work in them, and so assist them to *finish their course*, that they may, by the testimony of his Spirit, have ground to say, *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day*.[x]

Ans. 4. They long for death, that they may go to him, and be for ever with him.

It is not love to the world, nor a mere natural aversion to death, nor a fondness of a present life, that must hinder any true Christian from saying, with *Paul, I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better*.[y] No, it is a suspicion of their state, the awfulness of judgment and eternity, and the weakness of their faith, which do represent death as undesirable. If the Spirit of God set them right in all these things, death must appear amiable, for it opens the prison doors, and sets them in the way to behold the glory of their Lord, to whom they are so obliged; and enjoy him without interruption, to whom their hearts cleave with ardent love. As terrible as death is to nature, they cannot but embrace it, as it lets them into the full possession of all their Lord has purchased for them; the very hopes whereof yielded them more joy than all this world could give. Such things make them judge, *that to die is gain*,[z] and therefore to be coveted by them.

Ans. 5. They leave a good testimony for him, when their death is near.

They are far from repenting of any service done to him; they wish it had been greater. They regret not the heaviest suffering they had endured, but are thankful that they were enabled to bear it; esteeming it a *benefit that was given them*[a] to suffer for him. They have such experiments of his conduct and assistance in distresses; they have found such constant instances of his faithfulness and power, that they can without anxiety pass into the endless state. *I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day*.[b] *Paul* knew the importance of what he deposited in the hands of Christ, a soul capable of the greatest happiness or misery, and this to be determined in the day of death, and published at the judgment day. Nevertheless, he was cheerful, and his mind at quiet, on the very borders of eternity; but that none might accuse him of indiscretion, he tells you, the ground of his confidence was the acquaintance he had with Christ, by experiments, wherein any one besides this Lord had failed him; and so leaves it upon record, that the Lord had manifested his kindness, faithfulness, and truth to him, in the whole course of his warfare: he had so discharged the trust he had committed to him from his first conversion, that he is not ashamed of his labours or sufferings, and has no doubt concerning him, as to what concerned his perseverance in death, and his welfare in the proceedings at judgment. I might instance in *Polycarp*, and many others, who left a glorious testimony for Christ as a good master, and fit to recommend his service to all survivors.

Ans. 6. They believingly commit their departing souls to him for their final happiness. *They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*.[c] He knew his intelligent rational part must subsist after death; this was the *man*, and though of dignity far superior to the body, yet it was incapable to conduct, defend, or adapt itself to that world of spirits, upon which he was entering. He therefore puts himself into the hands of Jesus Christ, not doubting his willingness to receive him, or his fitness to discharge his undertaking. He was persuaded that if he received it, he would wash it from all its filth,[d] supply all its wants, make up all its defects, answer for all its faults, secure it against all its enemies, enlarge all its capacities, and replenish them to their utmost extent. Happy souls! thus lodged with him, who fully knows that state, of which we are so ignorant; and has the entire disposal of all that good which can make us happy there: *He saves to the uttermost*.[e]

*Exhortation.* Resolve to live to the Lord; and see that you maintain and exercise that resolution.

This is your duty and your interest too: a life thus spent will yield comfortable reflections upon a death-bed. *This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in this world*.[f] But see that your purpose extend to all the six particulars, wherein I have described wherein believers live to the Lord.

But I must consider this duty with some special respect to the *context*. There you will find, that the Holy Ghost calleth you to live to the Lord; more particularly,

1. In a strict adherence to his rules in the matters of religion.

2. In a Christian behaviour towards his servants who differ from you in lesser matters. Therefore,

1. Live to the Lord by a strict adherence to his rules in the matters of religion. It is his prerogative

w 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. x 2 Tim. iv. 8. y Phil. i. 23.
z Phil. i. 21. a Phil. i. 29.

b 2 Tim. i. 12. c Acts vii. 59. d Eph. v. 27.
e Heb. vii. 25. f 2 Cor. i. 12.

to appoint rules in this; for none but he knows what he will accept as worship, or what he will use as means which shall be blessed by him to spiritual benefit, and he is most jealous in things of this kind.

We find in this chapter the following directions about this matter:

(1.) Place not religion in things indifferent, *v.* 17. *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.* Men by not obeying this rule, abridge themselves as to their spiritual liberty; they are tormented with scruples, spend their time and zeal about trifles, which profit not, and neglect to mind what is accepted with God, and conducive to salvation. They who are hot for ceremonies, seldom mind the substance of religion.

(2.) Sincerely endeavour to get thy conscience rightly instructed in the mind of God; pray, and study his word, to find out what he enjoins and forbids, and what he allows as indifferent, *v.* 14. *I am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself.*

(3.) Admit no man to prescribe to thee in matters of religion, further than they show God's warrant. In this, the Lord is thy only *master*, and thou art his servant only; and not the servant of any one on earth. Therefore, *If thou keep a day, keep it to the Lord, and if thou keep it not*, let thy forbearance be because he has not appointed thee *to keep it*, *v.* 4, 6.

(4.) Be well persuaded in thy own mind as to every thing thou accountest to be sin or duty, that thou apprehendest it to be so, by divine direction, *v.* 1. *One believeth that he may eat all things, another eateth herbs.* And, *v.* 5. *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, i. e.* of the lawfulness of it by God's word.

(5.) Be true to thy conscience, and do nothing doubtingly, for the sake of any man, *v.* 22, 23. *He that doubteth, is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; for what is not of faith, is sin.*

These comprehend much of that rule by which the apostle declares, that he and others *lived to the Lord;* it is incumbent on you to follow their steps; for he is *your* Lord as well as theirs, and he will be your *Judge*. In this, therefore, be faithful; and what matter is it who condemns you? for he is sure to justify you, and approve of your practice. Men may reproach, imprison, take away your estates and lives too, for not obeying them, against this his declared will: but obedience to him will give you inward peace; and your Lord is sure to reward your fidelity with a *hundred-fold more in this life, than you can lose by it, and in the world to come eternal life.*[g] Loyalty to Christ will be found more gainful, than all the preferments you can get by will-worship, and compliances with human inventions.

A day is near, when this Lord whom you serve will publicly applaud you. He will say, *Well done, good and faithful servants*, who would not violate my laws, nor act against conscience to please the greatest, or to gain the pomp, the riches, or power, which your base compliance might have procured. It was to me you my *ministers* did live, when you refused such conditions of your ministry, as I appointed not. To me you lived, in executing your office when rulers forbade you. I will ratify your administrations, which the profane accused as nullities. To all the faithful *members* of his churches, he will say, To me you lived, when you adhered to my ministers, who were rejected because they durst not submit to sinful terms; well done you, who concurred with them in attempts for reformation, and kept your *garments clean*, in a time of common degeneracy and revolt. It was for me you became subject to calumnies, and branded as incapable of civil offices. For it was my cause you espoused, when you adhered to a pure worship, and refused to acknowledge that men had right to impose any terms of the communion of saints, which I had not appointed. His commendations may well encourage you to persevere, for they will be attended with a *crown of glory*, and ravishing *pleasures* for evermore.

2. Live to the Lord, by a Christian behaviour towards the servants of Christ, who differ from you in lesser matters. The apostle distinguisheth Christians here as strong and weak. The *strong*[h] (elsewhere called Τελειοι;) were such as understood their liberty by the gospel from the *Mosaic* ceremonies and rites. These were free to *eat* any wholesome food, and to omit the Jewish festivals, *v.* 2, 5. The *weak* were such as scrupled to eat flesh upon the principles of *Pythagoras*, or did forbear meats offered to idols. Many also of the Jews apprehended that *Moses's laws*,[i] which prohibited some meats, and enjoined the observation of certain *days* and *months*, were not abrogated. The strong *despised*[k] the weak as ignorant; the *weak* judged the strong as profane and ungodly; both quarrelled, and would force him, who differed, to comply with his own usages, and do as himself practised.

You find here many directions as to our behaviour in this case.

(1.) Own such to be *his* servants, as appear so in the judgment of charity. He is *thy brother*, *v.* 10. God *has received him* whom you judge, yea, *he shall be holden up*, *v.* 4.

(2.) Neither despise nor judge those that differ in such matters, *v.* 3.

(3.) Do not offend or grieve them, much less impose on them a compliance with you against their consciences, *v.* 13. *But judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall,* in his

g Mark x. 29, 30. h 1 Cor. ii. 6. i 1 Cor. viii. 7. k Col. ii. 16, 23.

*ther's way, v.* 15. *If thy brother be grieved with meat, now walkest thou not charitably, destroy not with thy meat, for whom Christ died.* If we st forbear the use of our liberty in lawful things,[l] the good opinion they have of our goodness, or ter judgment, induce them to act against their sciences, and so destroy themselves; surely the ument is much stronger against *compelling* them do so by any penalties; as loss of place or vileges, times, &c.

The arguments are strong, by which these direc- is are enforced, viz. Christ is our *only* Lord, and allows no man to possess his throne, either to pose on conscience, or to judge men's state. *To* they and you are accountable, *v.* 4. 11. Again, s from a dutiful regard *to the Lord*, [illegible] they are upulous, and act by their light, *v.* 6. yea, the rd may serve very good purposes by their differ- light and practice in those lower matters.

4.) *Follow the things that make for peace, and things erewith we may edify one another, v.* 19. This uld both restrain from hurting each other, and d to common benefit. He is wiser than the stle, that under our present imperfections expects *uniformity*, by another rule than that, viz. *Whereto have attained, let us walk by the same rule; and if any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal n this to you.*[m]

shall, from the connexion of the words, and to ply what I have said of dying in the Lord,

Observe, III. They who live to the Lord shall die the Lord, and be found to be his for their endless icity.

Though in the former observations I began with last clause, *viz.* living and dying we are the rd's, yet the conjunction may import, that because live and die to the Lord, we shall be the Lord's ing and dying; and as we shall be his both living l dying, so, as we live to him (which is what ith depends on) we shall also die to him, as far that expresseth our comfort and benefit by death. which I have spoken at large.

*Exhortation* 1. Be the Lord's *in life*, if you would his *at death*. The state of men at death, is what vas at the end of life. Accept, therefore, of his rs at present, for *now is the accepted time;*[n] now invites and pleads, this is the time of espousals. you reject him whilst this life continues, it is in n to think you can ever be joined to the Lord. ere will be no further overtures made, death will l you up under an eternal separation from the rd, other than as he will be thy Judge, and an nger of thy contemptuous refusals of him.

*Exhortation* 2. Live to the Lord, if you desire to to the Lord, for your eternal advantage.

All of you must die, *it is appointed.*[o] You shall die when, and where, and how the Lord pleaseth, whether you consent or not. But would you find death unstung, and friendly? Would you have Christ receive your departing souls, to fit them for, and admit them into, the heavenly mansions? Would you find it a release from all that is grievous, and to be a *joyful entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your Saviour?*[p] Then live unto the Lord. These are inseparably joined by the gospel constitution. O ask then, to *whom* do you live, is it to God or the devil? After what do you *walk*, is it after the flesh or the Spirit? This is your seed-time; *If you sow to the Spirit, you shall reap life everlasting: if you sow to the flesh, you shall of the flesh reap corruption.* It is high time the youngest of you should begin to live to the Lord, for you may die in youth. It is truest wisdom in any of you who have begun, to hold on to the end: for a life spent to the Lord, will at death end in happiness to yourselves, and great comfort to your godly friends.

This may afford some allay to our grief, when we reflect on the very afflictive occasion of our present meeting, viz. the death of the reverend, laborious, and useful Mr. Matthew Henry. I could not have chosen a fitter text, for it was eminently exemplified in him. Few ministers so acknowledged Christ's propriety in them, much fewer arrived to an equal degree of activity in the Lord's service.

He was the son of two eminent saints, who were the *glory of Christ* in their day; and their character has eminently survived in his life and temper, as in the account of their lives which he published. As they took more than ordinary pains in his education when young, so they received the highest pleasure in his probity and usefulness in their aged years. Nor did God give a testimony to their pious care in making it successful to him alone; but gave them the comfort of seeing all their grown children walking in their integrity.

God, to whom *all his works are known from the beginning*, oft lays a foundation for the service he designs, by fitting persons from the womb, as to constitution and genius, in great variety; as we see in St. *Paul*, *Luther*, *Melancthon*, &c. in like manner, having determined to do great things by our deceased brother, gave him a very strong body, without which his labours had wasted him in his youth: he also framed the organs of speech to the advantage of his public performances; his fancy was lively, his memory retentive, and his judgment solid.

Such a natural capacity rendered him capable of uncommon improvements, and being cultivated at home, and at the Reverend Mr. *Doolittle's*, he soon signalized himself in all the useful parts of learning proper to his designed employment, which was the

l 1 Cor. viii. m Phil. iii. 15, 16. n 2 Cor. vi. 2.

o Heb. ix. 27. p 2 Pet. i. 11.

ministry. Having finished those preparatory studies, and apprehending that the knowledge of the laws might contribute to more distinct conceptions of some subjects and terms in theology, he applied himself for some time to that study, and made good use of that knowledge in several of his composures.

After he had attained what he proposed to himself in the *Inns of Court*, he set himself toward entering upon the ministerial work, though in a time of persecution! He preferred this to all other employs, because (as himself oft suggested) the work was more pleasant, the subject which still employed the mind, more helpful to promote a heavenly life, and the power of religion in his own heart; it gave the best opportunity of serving Christ in his greatest designs on earth, and of benefiting mankind in what most concerned them, viz. the salvation of their souls.

In order to his undertaking this work, he impartially studied the controversy between the established church and the dissenters, and upon the maturest thoughts, he chose to be a *presbyterian* minister, being fully persuaded, the cause of Christ, in the matters debated, was in their hands, and for this, resolved to embark with them, notwithstanding the reproach and hardships to which he might be exposed; for it was not earth, but heaven, to which he directed his course. Yet, with his non-conformity, he highly esteemed all pious conformists, and kept up a Christian charity towards such as differed from him.

Upon the evidence of his eminent gifts and graces, with a strong propension to discharge the duties, and promote the blessed ends, of that sacred office, he was regularly invested in it by fasting and prayer, and the imposition of the hands of presbyters.

He always accounted the work of the ministry the most honourable employment; and was to his death a singular honour to it, by his unwearied diligence and exemplary conversation. From his undertaking the service of Christ in this function, the *business* of his life was, both to improve in meetness for it, and to *fulfil the ministry he had received of the Lord.* His *profiting appeared to all*, by being able on the sudden to perform so well upon any subject, and thereby he commended the close study of the Scriptures; for the whole *Bible* being fixed in his head, (as well as heart) facilitated his work on all occasions. Can the most invidious point to the man alive, of whom it can be more justly said, He laboured much in the Lord. If you consider how oft he preached, you must wonder how he could write so much. But if you reckon how many books he printed, could you imagine he preached so frequently? What time must be laid out in the five volumes on the Bible, besides many other valuable books and printed sermons!

Whilst he continued pastor in *Chester*, which was two-and-twenty years, he filled up that station with service on Lord's days and week days: besides this, he laid out himself in the adjacent counties, as one who had upon him the care of all the churches. How frequently did he preach seven or eight times a week!

Since his transplanting to this place, he spent himself here and in the city, as if his strength were miraculously supplied to do much, upon a foresight that his time was short. And of this he seemed to have some presages, when he assigned it as an apology to a godly person who cautioned him against over doing; and truly some such impulse was the best reason he had to give.

Great was his acceptance, though his lot was to be in an age wherein the office is so despised, that the same qualifications which commend all others can scarce preserve a minister from contempt. But Providence peculiarly smiled on our brother in this respect, though he neither courted applause, nor sought his worldly interest by flattery, or other unbecoming methods. What gave him esteem were his integrity, affableness, the triumph of grace over his passions, forwardness to speak well of all and ill of none, savoury discourses readily fitted to all occasions, useful and unwearied labours, and a readiness to serve all, with a pleasant acknowledgment of what endowments or success any others were blessed with. By these means the places were full where he was employed, persons of all denominations greatly affected him, and his surprising death is the subject of universal mourning.

All must acknowledge the aptitude of his performances to common benefit. Thus he studied, and accommodated his labours to persons of all ages. Young ones he catechised in a way that exceedingly conduced to give light, and beget an affection for gospel truths. Early religion he warmly pressed, and meltingly invited youth to close with Christ Jesus. Such as were converted, he laboured to improve to higher degrees of grace, and an exacter walking. For this end he published tracts, wherein most of the heads of practical religion are treated of with that judgment, as shows his acquaintance with the power of godliness and the hearts of men. His words were decent, though familiar, and his proverbial sentences were contrived to affect, and retain in the memory some important truth. If it be objected that he oft made use of Scripture phrases allusively, rather than in their *proper* sense, yet it must be granted, some *pious* things were ever gravely expressed by those words; and I think, that from his being so very conversant in Scripture words, they first presented themselves to his mind, when the matter he treated of would be aptly expressed thereby.

Whether he prayed or preached, it was with such a *fervour*, as declared his heart was in it, and that

was employed therein from the vigorous actings his faith and love.

As he earnestly implored the presence of God for cess, so through his blessing he found it granted a signal manner. Many, very many, were con- ted and edified by his ministerial labours. These now his crown.

This is the person whom God *has taken away with troke, and so suddenly*, as not to allow us time to y for his life. You can hear him no more, nor see a any more, till the general assembly. He is cut (at the age of fifty-two) when ripest for service. Need I call you to *lament* this loss; a loss so at, that I cannot aggravate it; so extensive, that carce know where to begin or end. A tender *wife* s lost a faithful affectionate husband, filling up t relation to all good purposes. Hopeful *children* prived of the kindest of fathers; one concerned see *Christ formed in them*, and fitted to promote ir welfare in every respect. You, *his people*, are reaved of a faithful, profitable pastor, whose ce is not easily filled up. *We ministers* have t a bright example, an affectionate brother, a neral assistant as occasion offered; a man, whose cessive pains must put the slothful to many shes. The loss is *public*, we have one fewer to mote the kingdom of our Lord, and stand in the p to avert impending judgments; yea, I fear we y lament the fall of such a pillar in the church, *taken away from the evil to come.*

We are stupid, if we weep not *for ourselves*. But for his part, his sudden death has no terror ending it, for his Lord found him employed as the se and faithful servants, whom he declareth *sed.*[q] He had preached twice on the Lord's day, preached also on *Monday*, and had appointed to the same on *Tuesday*, but died that morning; d, by death, released him from his labours. Sub- ssion to the divine will only, could have recon- ed his active soul long to survive his work; this al God prevented, by not suffering him to live one y beyond his labours. But the *rest* in heaven after ath, was what he longed for, and it seems that by ne presage he apprehended he was not far from s; for the last head in the last book he published, this, *Let us long for the perfection of those spiritual asures in the kingdom of glory.* And adds, *Our e to God in this world, is a love in motion, in hea- it will be a love at rest; O when shall that sabba- m come*, &c.

His present happiness yields some allay to our row; but yet it is a greater relief under all losses, at our Lord is the King *eternal*,[r] his word endureth *ever*;[s] with him is the residue of the Spirit; he has se ends in this sore dispensation, and can make work for *good.*

That this end may be attained, be all of you attentive to the voice of God by this rebuke, and comply therewith.

Let each impartially inquire, whether you have not a hand in removing this mercy, by your for- feiture. The death of very useful ministers (espe- cially when much needed) is generally a punishment for some sins of those who were most concerned in them. Wherein conscience points to any guilt, neglect not repentance; and apply to the blood of Christ by faith, lest even a worse thing come unto you. Again, see you act as becomes Christians under this providence.

Let the afflicted *widow* trust in God, as able to fill up the place of the deceased, and the *children* walk worthy of his name, and not depart from such a father's ways, as too many have done in this de- generate age. How solemnly would he have laid this charge, if he had seen them about him in his dying agonies! O may they find the return of his many recorded prayers!

You who here attended on his ministry, see you live the truths he dispensed, for you are accountable for great advantages: Christ will not account them *good* servants, who gained but *two* talents when they received *five*. Nor is it proper for you to overlook it; that since the death of the eminent Doctor Bates, you have lost two such worthy men, as Mr. Billio, and Mr. Henry, in the midst of their days, and the greatest capacity for service.

Many observe you, and your influence on our public interest, as dissenters, is very considerable. Therefore it is your concern, unanimously, to get a well qualified pastor; but regard sincerely the real benefit of your *souls*, in the choice you make; for if lower matters govern your inclinations, it discovers *carnality* of mind, and will grow more so, if in- dulged in this instance.

We *ministers* are hereby called to double our care in serving the designs of our Lord; we have fewer hands, and may soon meet with harder work. The aspect of things warns us to apply ourselves to get more wisdom, faith, and fortitude; that we may neither mistake our duty, or treacherously desert it, in the greatest trials.

Finally, It is incumbent on all to lay to heart the *suddenness* of your pastor's death. When he left you, he was likelier to live than many of us, and no symptom of any danger, till within a very few hours before his dissolution. We must be stupid unless it excite us to pray, *Lord, teach us to know how frail we are!*[t] And to endeavour so to know the frailty of your state, as to be always *ready*.[u] O get oil in your lamps, and those lamps trimmed: he that may die without warning, has reason to see that he delay not repentance, nor trifle in what eternity depends

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q Luke xii. 43. r 1 Tim. i. 17. s 1 Pet. i. 25.

t Ps. xxxix. 4. u Matt. xxiv. 44.

on. He *who applies his heart to wisdom*,[v] must so number his days, as to finish the proper business of every day in its day; for the morrow is not ours, and if it come, its own work is assigned with it.

It will be vain to wish we could recall past time, when conscience represents the many abuses and neglects of a past life now ending. The summons may be so hasty, that you have not many moments to set heart or house in order.

Therefore take care that your pursuits of this world be not excessive, lest you be arrested by that voice, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee*.[w] When you are tempted, remember, you may be cut off in the very act of sin, as *Zimri*[x] was. Entertain every call to duty, and opportunity for service and spiritual benefit, with this thought, there is *no working*[y] in the grave, where I must soon be; the night cometh, wherein no man *can work*.[z]

You must all confess, that you cannot die *safely*, unless you have served your generation,[a] are real converts, and in temper of spirit meet for heaven: nor can you die *comfortably*, unless your grace flourish, your fruit abound, and have at least a grounded hope of your interest in Christ, with a real sense of his favour.

These are too great, too necessary, and too difficult, to be postponed, or negligently applied to, by men, who are *crushed before the moth*.[b] The greatest haste, and the utmost diligence, are scarce enough to quiet us, when we realize how much depends upon a life subject to be cut off in a moment, by a thousand accidents. Happiest he, who *soonest*[c] enters into wisdom's paths, passeth the whole time of his sojourning here, with the *most* solicitous care in discharging all present duty, and improving all present helps. This is the way to finish well.

This *finishing well*, was a sentence oft made use of by my deceased brother, and therefore I conclude with an importunate desire, that we may have a solemn regard thereto in all our sacred and civil transactions.

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v Ps. xc. 12. w Luke xii. 20.
x Numb. xxv. 14 y Eccl. ix. 10.
z John ix. 4. a Acts xiii. 36.
b Job. iv. 19. c 1 Pet. iv. 17.

# AN APPENDIX:

CONTAINING

## AN ENTIRE SERIES OF SERMONS,

(FORTY-ONE IN NUMBER,)

ON WHAT CHRIST IS MADE TO BELIEVERS, IN FORTY REAL BENEFITS;

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS.

## OF THE REV. PHILIP HENRY.

# APPENDIX.

## SERMONS BY THE REVEREND PHILIP HENRY.

### SERMON I.

CHRIST IS THE FOUNDATION AND BELIEVERS ARE THE BUILDING.

1 CORINTHIANS iii. 11.

*For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

IT is not here alone, but in many other scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, that our Lord Jesus Christ is held forth unto us under the notion of a *foundation*; and believers, the church of the first-born, under the notion of a great *building*, reared upon that foundation. The explaining and applying of this will be the work of this day.

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation, and believers are the building reared upon that foundation.

There is a like union and relation between him and them, as there is between a foundation and a building.

Now that relation and union is,

*Very near and close.* The closer the better. Such is that between Christ and his church. They that are joined to the Lord are one with him, 1 Cor. vi. 17. "For both he that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one," Heb. ii. 11. *of one piece.*

It is also *very necessary and useful.* The building cannot stand without it. A foundation may stand long enough without a building upon it, but no building can stand without a foundation under it: and they must be joined—united. So Christ might have been without us, but we cannot be without him.

But are not the apostles and prophets the foundation? Eph. ii. 20. compare Matt. xvi. 18.

I answer; It is not said, the foundation, the apostles, but the foundation *of* the apostles; that is, the foundation which they themselves rested on. Had the apostles and prophets been asked, one by one, Who is your foundation, on whom do you build for life and happiness? they would have said, Jesus Christ. He was their all in all; and, therefore, should be ours.

Christ was the foundation which they reported, and preached of to others. Paul says here, *v.* 10. *I laid the foundation.* Whom? Himself! No, *v.* 11. no foundation but Christ. The prophets prophesied of him as to come; the apostles pointed at him as already come. "Behold the Lamb of God," said John the Baptist.

As for that place in Matthew, *by this rock*, is not meant the person of Peter. A poor rock for the church to be built on. A rock shaking immediately, *v.* 22. and worse afterward, Matt. xxvi. But it is the *confession* of Peter that is intended, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," *v.* 16. "Upon *this rock* I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

But is it not said that Jesus Christ is the corner stone? The corner stone is not the foundation!

I answer; His being the corner stone doth not hinder his being the foundation also. He is both in different respects, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste, Isa. xxviii. 16. The use of a corner stone is to unite the sides of the building, yea, and of the foundation too. That Christ doth by making Jew and Gentile one. "But now, in Jesus Christ, ye who sometimes were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us," Eph. ii. 13, 14. He that could join those two distant sides, and make them one, can certainly (and we hope will in his own due time) reconcile lesser differences. The corner post is reckoned very material in a timber fabric, and so the corner stone. "The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner," Ps. cxviii. 22.

I. Show the properties of Christ as a foundation, what kind of foundation he is.

1. A laid foundation, Isa. xxviii. 16. *I* lay; that is, God the Father, one that knew well enough how to do it, a God of infinite wisdom, and power. The Lord Jesus did not take to himself this honour of being a Mediator; he was called to it, appointed of God for such a purpose. And this is our comfort and joy: he that could best tell what would best serve to satisfy his offended justice, here fixed upon his Son for that purpose: "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 24. "I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people," Ps. lxxxix. 19.

2. A low foundation. Foundations are wont to be laid low; the lower the surer. So here, the Lord Jesus Christ was laid very low, that he might be a meet foundation for us; Phil. ii. 8. he *humbled* himself.

These were several steps of his humiliation:

Into the human nature; to be made a man. That was a long step downward. That the word should become flesh was more than if a star should turn into a clod.

Into subjection under the law. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," Gal. iv. 4. The moral law; nay, the ceremonial law—to be circumcised—presented in the temple—redeemed and ransomed with two turtles—bound to go up to all the feasts.

Into poverty and persecution, contempt and contradiction; to be spurned and trampled on.

To death itself, even the death of the cross; painful, shameful: it is called lifting up, but it was humiliation.

To the grave. When he was buried he was, as other foundations, laid under the ground.

And there was a necessity for all this: without it, no atonement, no reconciliation.

3. A foundation of stone, Isa. xxviii. 16. A stone is the fittest of all other things to make foundations of, because hard and firm, and yet easily hewn. Now Jesus Christ is a stone foundation, a rock. The Israelites "did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ," 1 Cor. x. 4.

4. A foundation out of sight. All foundations are so; we see the building, but we do not see the foundation. Now such a foundation is the Lord Jesus Christ; he is out of sight. Not below us, as he once was, under the earth, but above in glory.

His person is out of sight. Yet we *love* him, 1 Pet. i. 8.

His presence is invisible. He is with us every where, especially in his ordinances; but it is in an invisible way. We feel it; we do not see it. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," Matt. xviii. 20. Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii. 20.

His proceedings are invisible; the proceedings of his grace within, the proceedings of his providence without. "Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron," Ps. lxxvii. 20.

5. A precious foundation, Isa. xxviii. 16. Though all stones in their places are useful, yet they are not all precious stones. Few buildings are built upon precious stones, but the church is. Christ is precious in himself, he is of great worth, the fairest of ten thousands. He is precious in their account and esteem, 1 Pet. ii. 7. To others he is a stone of stumbling, but to them that believe he is precious.

6. A permanent foundation; Isa. xxvi. 4. the *rock of ages*, from everlasting to everlasting. The saints have been building on him from the beginning, and will be to the end of time. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," Heb. xiii. 8. His righteousness is everlasting righteousness; his promises unchangeable promises.

7. An elect, chosen foundation; Isa. xxviii. 16. *chosen* of God, and precious.

8. An experienced, tried foundation. He was tried by God, who laid a load upon him; by men and devils, who did their best against him, yet all to no purpose; by the saints, who have had occasion to make use of him, and he never failed them.

II. Show what is our duty in reference to this foundation.

1. To believe all this concerning him—that God hath laid him purposely for a foundation—anointed and appointed, him to be a Prince, and Saviour—given him to the world, that *whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

2. To behold and see our need of him. There is no rearing a building without a foundation. We have each of us a building to rear; and what foundation have we? None in ourselves; no righteousness of our own to commend us to God; no strength or ability to any thing that is good.

3. To renounce all other foundations. They are all but sand. He that builds upon the sand, his building will fall. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." Matt. vii. 24, &c.

4. To repair to him in the way of faithful and fervent prayer. Tell him thou art sensible of thy need of him, thou art undone without him.

5. To build upon him. In the great business of justification, to roll and rest thy soul by faith upon

s meritorious righteousness—None but Christ, ne but Christ.

In all our perils and dangers, personal or public, fly to him, to trust in him, to rely upon him: ithful is he that hath promised. Ps. lxii. 1. 2; vi. 1. "Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from m cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and y salvation; he is my defence: I shall not be eatly moved," Ps. lxii. 1, 2. "God is our refuge id strength, a very present help in trouble," Ps. vi. 1.

6. To beware what we build upon this foundation, opinion, in practice. "Now if any man build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, ood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be ade manifest: for the day shall declare it, because shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try ery man's work of what sort it is. If any man's ork abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall ceive a reward." 1 Cor. iii. 12—14. If you build ose, vain, careless walking, your hopes built will accordingly wood, hay, stubble.

OF THE CHURCH THE BUILDING. "Ye are built pon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, esus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in hom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth nto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also re builded together for an habitation of God through ie Spirit," Eph. ii. 20—22. *Ye are built*, saith the postle,—ye believing Ephesians, Christians, saints.

Show, I. What kind of building the church is; hat are the properties of it.

There is a great deal of difference in buildings. he church is a none-such building.

1. It is a spiritual building. Other buildings are ade of wood and stone, and such like materials. ut this building is made of men and women: Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual ouse, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," 1 Pet. ii. 5. What our Lord Jesus says of his kingdom, is true of is building, that it is not of this world—*in* it, but not f it, John xv. 19. It is a building of souls. Souls, nited to him by faith, are those that make up this uilding.

2. It is a spacious building; a building of large nd vast extent; a great house, nay a great city, nay great kingdom, from the rising of the sun to the setng of the same—east, west, north, and south, Matt. iii. 11. It is true, in comparison with the devil's uilding it is but small, a remnant, a little, little ock; but in itself considered, it is exceedingly wide nd comprehensive. "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, nd kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before he throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white obes, and palms in their hands," Rev. vii. 9.

3. It is a high building. Though part of it be here below, yet the top of it is as high as heaven. There it is that the glorious angels are, and the spirits of just men made perfect; all of this building.

And then for those that belong to it that are below; their aims and desires are high, their hopes and expectations are high, their affections and conversations are above: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," Phil. iii. 20. They trample upon the great things of the world as dirt, as Moses: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," Heb. xi. 24.

4. It is a holy building, Eph. ii. 21. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. iii. 16. Every building is not a temple. The church is God's temple. The temple was a place set apart for God—from all other uses for holy uses; so "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." And it is our duty to set ourselves apart to be for him—wholly—solely. This temple is called a house of prayer, Isa. lvi. 7. Holiness to the Lord is written upon the front of this building. It is the house that he dwells in. "His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it," Ps. lxxxvii. 1, 2; cxxxii. 13, 14.

5. It is a living building. No other is so. The same who are quickened, are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," Eph. ii. 1, 20. The foundation is a living foundation, and the superstructure is a living superstructure, 1 Pet. ii. 4. 5. All the materials in this building are men and women made spiritually alive—quickened with divine quickenings. Such as once were dead in trespasses and sins, but are now otherwise—alive to God. O make this sure to yourselves.

6. It is a light building. This is one thing that makes a building pleasant, and comfortable—many and large windows. All the world besides is in darkness; it is the church only that hath the true light. As Egypt and Goshen. "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord, walk as children of light."

There are many things about which men are in the dark till they are in this building. As, about God; his glorious excellences, and perfections. About the Lord Jesus; who he is, and what he is, in himself, and to us. About the corruption of nature. About the evil of sin—the vanity of the creature. And the reality of invisible things—heaven—hell.

In all these grace enlightens. The devil's building is a dark building—called the kingdom of darkness, Col. i. 13.

7. It is a secure, a safe, building. Other buildings are exposed to wind, and weather, and water—to fire—to assaults, and batteries; but this is safe from all peril and danger, Matt. xvi. 18. Men in all ages and generations have been heaving at the church of God, and seeking to overthrow it, but it hath hitherto been in vain, and to no purpose; and will be so still, Ps. ii. The church of God is such a building as the ark was, 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

8. It is a spreading, growing building. "All the building fitly framed together, *groweth* unto a holy temple in the Lord." It grows larger—by the addition of those to it who shall be saved. It grows better—as to light and knowledge—as to gifts and graces. Amen! The Lord increase it more and more. It increases slowly—church-work is slow work—but sure; though amidst much opposition, as in Ezra's time.

In some places, where a while ago there were but two or three houses, there is now a great town. And is it not so, (and would to the Lord it were so more and more!) as to the growth and progress of religion? In many towns and families where ignorance and profaneness ruled a few years since, now God is worshipped, and Christ; and his truths and ways are owned, and professed.

Show, II. What is our duty in reference to this building.

1. To see that we have a secure place, and standing in it. As it is a great privilege to be of that body and tree whereof Christ is the head and root, so it is a great privilege to be of that building whereof Christ is the foundation.

It is certain all that adhere to it in an outward, visible profession are not of it. The moss and the ivy cleave close to the walls of a house, but they are not on the foundation: so the hypocrite. There is a great deal of difference between such a one and the true stones, 1 John ii. 19.

All the true stones in this building are living stones, 1 Pet. ii. 5. What life hast thou? They are a habitation of God through the Spirit, Eph. ii. 22. Art thou so? Rather, doth not the unclean spirit dwell in thee, and rule in thee? Luke ii. 21—26.

But, how may it be done?

I answer; We must be sure we are fetched out of the quarry of a natural condition, by regenerating grace. There is much to do in this work—the dust flies in the face of him that hews; but it must be done—there is no other way.

We must by faith receive Christ Jesus the Lord; make him our foundation; rest and rely upon him for righteousness, acceptance, and salvation; cleaving to him with full purpose of heart.

Having done so, we must build up ourselves in our most holy faith; *growing* in grace; *adding* to faith, virtue. If we grow *into Christ* more and more, we are certainly in him, Jude 20, 21.

2. To seek as much as in us lies the good of the building. If we can do nothing else we can pray for it, Ps. cxxii. 3, 6. "for the *peace* of Jerusalem." Peace within itself; that differences may be healed: the cement, or mortar, is love. It is said, that all the stones in Solomon's temple were so ordered that they looked like one stone. Peace from enemies; open, secret, covered, uncovered.

Our prayers must be seconded with our endeavours. Can we do nothing towards its enlargement, its establishment, its repair?

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## SERMON II.

CHRIST IS OUR FOOD, AND ALL TRUE BELIEVERS FEED UPON HIM AND ARE FED WITH HIM.

JOHN vi. 51.

*I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

THERE are several things to be learned out of these words.

I. That Jesus Christ is bread.

II. That this bread hath sundry special properties which belong to it, and to no other.

III. That it is our duty to eat of this bread.

IV. That they that truly eat of this bread shall live for ever.

I. Jesus Christ is bread. There are several things by which he is set forth in the Scriptures, and among the rest, bread. Those who heard him say that he was bread, and that they must eat him, were offended; it was a hard saying, and they could not hear it, v. 60. The reason was, they understood it carnally, and they should have understood it spiritually: just as the papists do by another of his sayings, *This is my body*. He says also, I am the vine; I am the door: and must these be understood literally? It cannot be. He is the head of a great body, and the foundation of a great house. Literally? no, spiritually. So he is bread; he himself says so.

You know bread is some kind of corn, rye, or wheat, or barley, or the like, thrashed and ground, kneaded and baked, and then it is food for us. We eat it, and are nourished by it. So Christ: he is spiritual bread.

He was thrashed and ground in his suffering and dying, and that was necessary in order to his being made bread for us: I give my flesh. Luke xxiv. 46. "It *behoved* Christ to suffer." It was necessary it should be so, in order to the satisfying of God's justice, without which we could have no nourishment, no comfort to our souls. Without blood no remission. There was death in the threatening, and

herefore his heel must be bruised, or the serpent's ead would not have been broken. Therefore it oncerns us all to be acquainted with Christ, and im crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. This was Paul's chief tudy, and it should be ours.

The sufferings and death of Christ are the food of ur souls. Every thing that hath life must have ood to support that life; it cannot live without food. o it is with our souls; they can no more live with- ut food than our bodies can. Take the food away, nd you take the life away. Adam in innocency had ll the trees in the garden given him, save one, that he fruit thereof might be food to him; that is, to his ody; and as for his soul, God himself immediately as the life, and strength, and maintenance of it. But when we find he fell from God, all supplies of hat kind were for ever cut off, and he must have erished everlastingly, if some new nourishment had not been provided for him. Now that new nourishment was the seed of the woman bruised; and therefore God revealed it to him immediately, even before he pronounced sentence, Gen. iii.

II. Notice the properties of this bread.

1. It is the bread of God. "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world," v. 33. Not the bread which God feeds upon himself; and yet in a sense he is so, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. He is satisfied in him and with him. But he is the bread which he hath provided for *us* to feed upon, as the Lamb of God, John i. 29. He knew we could never have thought of such a way of nourishment for ourselves. No, not if we had had all the angels in heaven to help us, and therefore he did it, Job xxxiii. 24. Ps. lxxxix. 19. Gen. xxii. 13, 14. As he is a foundation of God's laying, so he is bread of God's providing.

Was the bread made of corn for our bodies our own contrivance? No: who could have devised such a thing? It is the appointment of our heavenly Father, and a wise and gracious appointment it is, Gen. i. 29. So Christ, the bread of life, is of God's providing.

2. It is given bread. Given by God the Father; "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven," v. 32. The same that contrived gave, freely and of his own accord, without our asking or seeking. It was a choice gift, John iii. 16. It was the unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15. O be sensible of this love, and give thanks; forget not this above all his benefits! "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

This bread is given by the Son himself. It was his own act and deed, to give himself to be bread for us: "My flesh which I will give for the life of the world." It was a wonder he should ever yield to such a motion when it was made to him; but he did it readily, at the first word; "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Such love he had for us, and for our redemption and salvation, Eph. v. 2. And should not we then readily and cheerfully give ourselves to him; all we are, have, or can do? Can we bestow ourselves better?

3. It is living bread. "I am the *living* bread that came down from heaven." All other bread is a dead thing, but this bread lives. It was dead, but it is alive, and lives for evermore, Rev. i. 18. And it is well for us that it is so, for he ever lives to make *intercession* for us. That is the work and business of his life, Heb. vii. 25.

4. It is the bread of life, v. 48. Not only living itself, but giving life to us: no other bread doth so. Other bread maintains life, but where is the bread that gives life? This bread gives life; it makes those to live that were dead. It is no sooner received by a hand of faith but the man is alive; alive to God, which is the best life we can live in this world.

5. It is manna. Manna was the bread which God gave the Israelites from heaven, fresh every morning; and dainty bread it was. It came down in a dew; it was small, round, and white, and the time of gathering it was the morning.

This manna was a type of Christ, the true manna. As that came down from heaven, so did he; that in a dew, he in the dew of the gospel. As that was little, round, and white, so is he; *little*, in his humiliation; *round*, in his eternity, without beginning of days or end of life; *white*, in his spotless innocency. As the time for gathering that was in the morning, so of this: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." As that fed the Israelites while in the wilderness, so this feeds our souls while we are in the wilderness of this world. It ceases in Canaan.

6. It is meat indeed, v. 55. It is *solid* and *substantial* meat. Not the shadow of meat, but *true bread*, v. 32. All the things in this world are, to a soul, like the picture of the world with which the devil tempted our Lord Jesus, delusive, and unsatisfactory. "Wherefore," then, "do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Mix faith with this, and labour accordingly, John vi. 27.

It is *suitable* meat. It is no meat if it be not suitable. Every creature is maintained with food suited to it, Gen. iii. 14. Now nothing is suitable food to our souls but Jesus Christ; nothing else is suitable to their *nature*. Spiritual beings must have spiritual food. All things under the sun are carnal. He was a *fool* that bid his soul feast upon what was in his barn, Luke xii. 16. Nor is any thing else suited to the *necessities* of our souls. Two things

our souls have need of—righteousness, and strength; and where are these to be had, but with him? Isa. xlv. 24. We have need of food that will be physic too: and such food is Christ, Ezek. xlvii. 12. *Sweet* meat, Cant. ii. 3. the *fruit* of his death, resurrection, ascension, 1 Pet. ii. 3. gracious, or sweet. Every thing in Christ is sweet to a believing soul: his promises, pardons, offices, ordinances, comforts, communion. His word is sweeter than honey, Ps. cxix. 103. His love is sweeter than wine, Cant. i. 2. His presence is sweeter than marrow, Ps. lxiii. 5. In a word, his mouth is sweetness, and all he is delights, Cant. v. 16.

*Satisfying* meat. A man may surfeit with the world, but he can never be satisfied with the world. A man may be satisfied with Christ, but he can never be surfeited with Christ. Compare Isa. lv. 2. with Ps. xxxvi. 8.—abundantly satisfied, satisfied, and over-satisfied, satisfied, and satisfied again. This is the excellency of spiritual daintics, that the more a man feeds on them, the more he would have, and yet he hath a kind of satisfaction in what he hath; such as causes him to say, *Return unto thy rest, O my soul*, Ps. cxvi. 7. He hath union with Christ, yet he would have more and nearer union; he longs to be with him.

Now all this is said to draw out your desires, and to provoke your appetite to this meat. And doth it not prevail? Do ye not feel your need of Christ? Are ye not hungering and thirsting after righteousness? If you are, blessed are ye, for ye shall be filled; if not, you will be sent away empty, Matt. v. 6. Luke i. 53.

III. It is our duty to eat of this rare bread.

*If any man eat;* implying, if we do not eat of it we are like to be never the better for it. It will do us no good to hear of it only. We have heard a great deal of Christ; but what will that avail us, except we believe what we hear. It will do us no good to look upon it only. Will looking upon meat nourish us? No; we must eat if we will be nourished. Will looking upon Christ, and seeing others feed upon him, feed and nourish thee? No, though it is the best fare in the world.

What is meant by eating? I answer, believing, *v.* 35. Of all the comparisons by which believing is set forth in Scripture, none is like this of eating Christ, and feeding upon Christ.

Before we eat we feel a need of meat, and have a desire toward it, an earnest desire, we *must* have it. Give a man what else you will; No, says he, I must have meat. As the Egyptians parted with all for bread. So it is with the soul. It sees its lost and undone condition in itself by reason of guilt, and not sees it only, but feels it, and thereupon must have Christ; as the prodigal, Luke xv.

As in eating there is the taking of the meat, putting it into the mouth, and chewing and digesting it, whereby it is made my own, and turned into blood and spirits in my body; so in believing there is a particular application made of Christ, and his merit and righteousness, Gal. ii. 21. We may see, and hear, and smell at a distance, but that that we eat must be near us; that that nourishes must be made one with us. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts," Eph. iii. 17.

As after eating there is strength and vigour, (Ps. civ. 15. *the staff of life,*) the desire satisfied, the body recruited, made able for work and burthen; so upon believing there follows spiritual strength, peace, comfort, joy, ability for duty, walking with God, working for God, which they that do not believe have not.

How is it proved to be duty thus to do?

I answer; 1. From the many calls and invitations to it both in the Old Testament, and in the New. Isa. lv. 1. Matt. xi. 28. John vii. 37. If his mind were not we should come and eat, he would not in this manner invite and call. See Mark x. 49. He calls; therefore we may come.

2. From the many commands and injunctions to it, absolutely requiring it of us. He commands, therefore we must come. We are under guilt, the greatest guilt of all other, if we do not, 1 John iii. 23. O bethink thyself, and do as he commands. Thou hast broken other commands; in this be obedient. It is to eat of the best meat that ever was prepared. When the serpent (namely, the devil) assailed Eve, that which gave him advantage was, that the thing he moved her to was only to eat, and the fruit was such as was pleasant. Yet all the persuasions of heaven and earth will not prevail with some people to eat of this fruit; not forbidden, but *commanded*, fruit; not meat that will poison, but meat that will *save* thee. O then take and eat: receive Christ Jesus the Lord, and believe in him: think thou hearest him saying to thee, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," Cant. v. 1. Shall I inquire what bread do ye live upon? Bread of idleness, deceit, violence, carnal pleasure, your own duties and performances! It will be gravel, Prov. xx. 17.

IV. They that truly eat of this bread shall live for ever.

What more likely motive could possibly be used to prevail with us: Eat, and live; eat, and live for ever. Everlasting life will certainly be the portion of all those, that by a true and a lively faith receive Christ Jesus the Lord, who eat his flesh and drink his blood, feed upon him. But who says so? He that will certainly make it good; the Amen, the faithful and true witness. It is repeated often, *v.* 35, 48. and *v.* 47. with a solemn asseveration:—he *hath* it; it is as surely his as if now in glory. Now, do you know what this living for ever is, what it means? It is to be saved; delivered from the second death in hell, and made eternally happy in heaven.

And shall not this allure us? God said to Adam, In the day thou eatest, thou shalt die the death, surely die. Christ says to us, In the day thou eatest, living thou shalt live, thou shalt surely live. Eating ruined us, eating saves us.

Inference,

1. Then the bread spoken of in this chapter is not sacramental bread; nor the eating here spoken of sacramental eating, as the papists would have it, to prove transubstantiation.

For, the sacrament of the Lord's supper was not yet instituted, when Christ spake this: and, therefore, it had been impossible for his hearers to understand what he meant.

Many do eat the sacramental bread that do not live for ever, as 1 Cor. x. 4.

Many do live for ever, that never eat sacramental bread, as, besides all elect infants dying in infancy or childhood, the converted thief upon the cross, and many another. Yet to eat the sacramental bread is certainly duty—*Do this;* and for any that are adult to live in the neglect of it when they have a call to it, and opportunity for it, is a great sin, and must be reckoned for. Nay, it is comfortable, sweet, profitable, gainful duty; it is a feast, and that is the reason our Lord Jesus hath appointed the outward elements to be bread and wine, that by eating and drinking them by faith, might be sealed to us pardon of sin, peace with God, right and title to heaven.

2. Then see the reason why multitudes perish eternally. They will not eat of this bread, their mouths are out of taste to it, they are filled with worldly trash; if he that eats lives eternally, he that doth not eat dies eternally. This is gospel, Mark xvi. 16.

3. Then you that have eaten, in God's name, take the comfort of it; I mean, that are true believers. Eternal life is yours.

4. Then be exhorted all of you to eat of this bread; we must eat often, daily.

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## SERMON III.

CHRIST IS THE ROOT AND BELIEVERS ARE THE BRANCHES.

JOHN XV. 5.

*I am the vine, ye are the branches.*

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus, which he spake to his disciples; wherein he says, concerning himself, I am the vine, and concerning them, Ye are the branches. I am the vine, namely, the root of the vine. Christ and true believers are a great tree; and, amongst all other trees, he hath pitched upon two to set forth himself and them; a vine here, and an olive-tree in Rom. xi. Both of them are choice trees, and of great use, bearing excellent fruit. Now, the root is Christ, and believers are the branches of that tree. These two, the root and the branches, make the tree, as the head and members do the body. Compare 1 Cor. xii. 12.

DOCT. Jesus Christ and true believers make one great tree, whereof he is the root and they are the branches.

I wave at present that it is a vine; having had occasion lately to speak of the church under that notion from Isa. xxvii. 2, 3. and therefore I only say, it is a tree, a great tree, whereof he is the root, believers are the branches.

Show, I. They that are in this relation are true believers.

Are not hypocrites branches? Doth not baptism ingraft all that come under that ordinance into Christ? In a sense it doth, into his visible body: many grafts are grafted that come to nothing, never knit, never fasten, and so wither and die: yet the stock remains alive and good, and breaks forth again. So it is here: only true believers, such as are called, and chosen, and faithful, are the true branches.

1. They, and none but they, have communion with Christ. Elect persons not yet called may be said to have a remote potential union, being in the decree. External visible professors have a kind of seeming union, such as a sprig or branch which is tied to a tree with a string or with only, may be said to have; which is another sort of union than that of the true branches. The true branches are so in it as to be of it, but so is not such a branch, 1 John ii. 19. Judas was constantly with Christ as the rest of the apostles were, tied both to him and them by an external tie, yet all the while he was a limb of the devil, a branch of the cursed root; not of Christ the true root.

O then see to this, that besides the outward, there be an inward, ingrafting by a true act of faith.

2. They, and none but they, have spiritual life in them. We are all by nature dead in trespasses and sins, dead in law, dead in state; there is no spiritual life in us, none of the life of God, Eph. iv. 18. we are alienated from it. We have natural life, and live as men, but not otherwise. Just as in a tree; you may see it plainly in yonder great oak;* how many dead branches are there; *branches*, but dead. Such are all hypocrites in the tree Christ; they have none of Christ's Spirit dwelling in them, and therefore they have no life. It is the Spirit that quickens, 1 Cor. xv. 45. They have not the Son, therefore no life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life," 1 John v. 12.

It concerns us all to inquire, What life have I? Am I alive to God? The prodigal son was alive, during his ramble, but not to his father, he was

* Mr. Henry's residence was called Broad Oak, there being a large tree of that description very near the house. It was cut down in May, 1711. Matt. Henry's Diary, MS.

dead to him. Inquire what signs of life you have. Do you possess sense, motion, appetite?

3. They, and none but they, do bring forth fruit in him, see *v.* 2.—"every branch *in me* that brings not forth fruit." To bring forth fruit is to do that which is for the matter of it good; either towards men, in works of justice, mercy, charity; or towards God, in praying, hearing, sanctifying the sabbath. Now all this an hypocrite may do; nay, he may do more than many a true Christian; but nothing of it *in Christ*. Here they part. "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in *the name* of the Lord Jesus," Col. iii. 17. They do it by virtue of strength received from him, John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

They bring forth fruit, aiming with a single eye at pleasing him, to show forth his virtues and praises, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And also, it is done trusting to his merit and mediation alone for acceptance, Phil. iii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 5. Now doth any hypocrite do this? Can he say, as Paul, Phil. i. 21. "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?"

4. They, and none but they, have heartily and unfeignedly consented to him. This is it that makes Christ ours, and us his; when we receive him to ourselves, John i. 12. and give ourselves to him, 2 Cor. viii. 5. upon gospel terms. This puts us *into* him. Now no hypocrite doth this. He may profess to do it in word and tongue, but that is all.

5. They, and none but they, are owned by him as true branches. To others he says, *Depart from me*, I know you not. What, not know us? We have prophesied, eaten, and drunk in thy name, Matthew vii. 22, 23. Luke xiii. 25—30. Though ye have, yet, if workers of iniquity, depart.

Aye, but he calls the honest, upright, obedient, fruitful people, his friends, his children, his brethren, John xv. 7.

Show, II. What kind of root Christ is to these branches.

1. A universal root; to all of them; Jew or Gentile; of what kindred, or country, or nation, or language soever they be.

To Old-Testament saints. He was Abraham's root, and David's root: a branch from them as man, and yet a root to them as God-man. They were all in him; all saved by him.

To New-Testament saints. He was Peter's root, and Paul's root, and thy root, and my root, if we be true believers.

There are two universal roots; and these are the two Adams. The first man Adam was a common root to us all, as men and women. God planted him a noble vine, but he degenerated, and became, to all his posterity, a root of bitterness, bearing gall and wormwood, sin and wrath. When he fell we all fell. But God was pleased to appoint us a second Adam, another root—Jesus Christ—that whosoever believes in him might not perish, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

2. An unseen root. The root of a tree lies invisible, out of sight; we see it not. The tree we see, but not the root. So it is with Christ that saves us, 1 Peter i. 8. He was visible many years when, being made flesh, he dwelt among us, but now we see him no more with bodily eyes; though by an eye of faith we do see him, as it is said of Moses, Heb. xi. 27. The root of other trees is out of sight below; the root is out of sight above. The church is a great tree inverted, its root is in heaven, its branches here on earth, multitudes of them. It is true there are branches in heaven with their root.

3. An unsightly root. In the root of a tree there is no kind of beauty, or comeliness; no greenness as there is in the branches, or fruit; nothing to commend it to the eye; it is a despicable thing. So was Christ our root, in his humiliation, Isa. liii. 2. View him in his birth, in the stable; in his life, not having where to lay his head; but especially in his death, hanging upon the tree. Would any one think him to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world? Allude to 1 Samuel x. 27.

4. A strong root. This is one excellency of a root, that it be firm and stable; sufficient to bear the weight and burthen of the tree and branches that grow upon it, Rom. xi. 18. Our Lord Jesus is a strong Saviour, Ps. lxxxix. 19. Jer. l. 34. Heb. vii. 25. We have need of such a one,

(1.) To satisfy the justice of God for the sins we are guilty of, by undergoing the weight of his infinite wrath. This he did, and no one else could, Psalm xl. 6—8.

(2.) To support and succour us under our temptations. This also he is able to do. Heb. ii. 18. The world tempts, but, be of good cheer, "I have overcome the world," John xvi. 33. The devil also; but "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly," Rom. xvi. 20.

(3.) To save and deliver us from all our enemies, wicked men, death, and the grave, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56.

5. A sappy root. This is another excellency. If the root be withered, and dry, the tree cannot flourish; how should it? See Ps. civ. 16. "The trees of the Lord are full of sap."

The sap of this great tree, that keeps it green and flourishing, is the Spirit; the Spirit of grace. Now Christ the root had the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34. Col. i. 19: according to the promise, Isa. xi. 2. He had a fulness of all the gifts, graces, and comforts of the Spirit: knowledge, wisdom, faith, love, meekness, patience, humility, self-denial. He had them all in *perfection* as God-man. There were in him no mixture of the contrary corruptions.

6. A supplying root. The sap which the root hath it hath it not for itself, but for the branches. The branches suck and draw from it, and so are maintained in their greenness and fruitfulness. Though

root have it, yet if it do not communicate it the is none the better. The Lord Jesus Christ is a mmunicative root. What he hath of the Spirit ath for *us*, John i. 16. Psalm lxvii. 18. compare . iv. 8.

s the sun hath light, the springs and fountains er, the mother milk in her breasts, not for them- es; so it is here. He is our Joseph, our great -master. Joseph did not lay up for his own use, to supply others. See his gracious invitation to r sinners, to come to him for what they want, lv. 1—3. Matt. xi. 28. John vii. 37. Rev. iii. 18. l let us come to him accordingly.

Exhortation I. Suppose we are branches, true nches, in Christ the vine, what is to be done?

. You have cause to be very thankful to the great sbandman that hath grafted you into him.

Consider, (1.) If he had not done it, it had never n done. We could not have ingrafted ourselves. dly relations, ministers, could not have done it. hand but his could have performed it.

2.) What misery it frees us from. Hereby we are off from the wild olive, from the devil's stock l family, from the bondage of his vassals, Rom. 24.

3.) What privileges it entitles us to. It is a great nity and honour to be a branch of such a noble e. Now thou mayst with comfort call God Father, d come to him with boldness, assured of due sup- es, of all things needful both for life and godli- ss. Hereby thou hast right and title to the hea- nly inheritance: thy root will certainly bring thee ere he is.

(4.) How unworthy thou wert, and how unlikely such advancement. Perhaps of mean extrac- n, less than the least; perhaps a crooked piece. ere are but a few, and thou art one, John xiv. 22. not high minded, Rom. xi. 14.

(5.) The time when he did it. Perhaps early in y days. If so, the time was a time of love, Ezek. i. 18.

(6.) By what means. The word, perhaps occa- nally heard; the rod, perhaps working with the rd. O say, as David, Ps. ciii. "Bless the Lord, my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy me. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all s benefits." Say, as Paul, "Now unto the King ernal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be nour and glory for ever and ever," 1 Tim. i. 17.

2. Your duty is to take the comfort of it to your uls daily. It is the will of God, that his people ould be a comforted people; and what will com- rt if this will not. Christ is the vine, and I am e of the branches? If so,

(1.) Then the Father will certainly take care of e; to purge me and prune me. Seasonably; for y good, *v.* 1, 2.

(2.) Then I shall be sure not to be cut off, nor cast out, John xvii. 11, 12. Dead branches are easily broken off, nay, blown off, but not living ones. That is, provided I am a fruitful branch. And he will make us fruitful. As it is our duty, so it is his promise.

(3.) Then when I die, I shall be transplanted into God's paradise.

(4.) Then he will reckon with those that lop at these branches, Ps. lxxx. 12.

3. You must abide in him. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bring- eth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," John xv. 4—8. There are in these verses three arguments to move us to it: While we abide in him he will abide in us; It will be a means of our fruit- fulness; and, We shall have what we will for asking.

What is it to abide in Christ?

(1.) To abide in the truths of Christ; to hold them fast, and not to let them go, 2 Tim. i. 13. God only knows how we may be tried as to this matter. The way of popery is an erroneous way in doctrin- als; it is called the lie, and how many poor souls are poisoned by it; but beware, "lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness," 2 Pet. iii. 17.

(2.) To abide in the righteousness of Christ. Our own righteousness and Christ's righteousness are in competition. Now which art thou for? The Pharisee was for his own, Luke xviii. Paul was for Christ's, Phil. iii. We have need to look to this daily, in every thing.

(3.) To abide in the love of Christ, Jude 21. John xv. 9. The way to continue in the love of Christ, is to continue in his obedience, *ch.* xiv. 23.

(4.) To abide in the fellowship of Christ. Fellow- ship with Christ is to be had in the use of his holy ordinances, Cant. i. 7, 8.

4. We must abound in fruit-bearing. This he expects from all the branches that are in him. Leaves will not serve the turn; it is *fruit* that God looks for. Yet there must be leaves also: a visible profession, Rom. x. 10.

(1.) There must be good fruit, Matt. iii. 10. The fruits of the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meek- ness, temperance."

(2.) Much good fruit, John xv. 8. A little will not serve, though good; it must bear a proportion to our standing. There is more looked for from those that have stood long than from others, Heb. v. 12.

It must also bear a proportion to our supplies. Where most cost hath been bestowed, most means used, there should be most fruit.

(3.) It must be fruit in season, Ps. i. 3. According to the present circumstances of our condition, Eccl. vii. 14.

O that I knew what to say to move to this. The great controversy that God hath with us at this day is about our fruit; so little is found, that we have reason to fear cutting down, Luke xiii. 7—9. Isa. v. 7.

5. There is duty lying upon us also towards our fellow-branches. Which is,

(1.) As much as in us lies to live in love and peace with them, not envying, judging, despising, boasting—the higher, the lower—the bigger, the lesser—the stronger, the weaker. All branches are not top branches; there should be no provoking, rubbing against, fretting one another, Gal. v. 6.

(2.) To promote their growth and fruitfulness. Every one in his place and way; one means of doing this is by Christian communion, Heb. x. 25.

Exhortation II. Suppose we are not yet true branches, is there no hope?

None at all if we continue in that condition, Eph. ii. 12. If without Christ, we are without hope. But if we look about us in time, the matter may be amended. O then be persuaded—To-day, while it is called to-day.

1. Acquaint yourself with the terms of the change; upon what terms you may be Christ's and Christ yours; and accept of them. Many are ignorant and so perish, John iv. 10. The terms are,

(1.) You must be willing to come off from the old stock, the service of sin; all sin must be renounced; no more fruit must be brought forth to it.

(2.) You must assent and consent to a new Master; you must take his yoke upon you. And what harm is there in all this? O do it.

2. Apply yourself to the great Husbandman, which is the Father; beg of him to graft you into this vine; to bestow his Spirit and grace upon you, to be a living principle in you.

3. Assent and consent to the gospel.

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## SERMON IV.

CHRIST IS RAIMENT TO US, AND IT IS OUR DUTY TO PUT HIM ON.

ROMANS xiii. 14.

*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE same that was said when our Lord told his hearers he must be their food, and they must eat his flesh—*This is a hard saying*, John vi. 60.—may be said concerning this of Paul here—*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.* Is Christ a garment, a cloak? It seems he is.

Food and raiment are the two great requisites for our bodies, which if we have we are commanded to be therewith content, 1 Tim. vi. 8. The same two things must be had also for the soul, food and raiment; spiritual food, and spiritual raiment. And what is that? I answer, Jesus Christ; he is our food, and he is our raiment, and if we have him we may well be content; nay, joyful, and cheerful, and thankful; but, alas! how many are there that mind not these things, that are carking and caring what *they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and wherewithal* they shall be clothed, as to their bodies, the perishing part, but mind not what becomes of their souls, their precious, their heaven-born souls, whether they be fed or no, clad or no.

The apostle here would have it to be otherwise. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." But in Gal. iii. 27. he speaks as if all that were baptized had put on Christ already; "For as many of you as have been baptized unto Christ, have put on Christ."

There are two ways of putting him on—in *profession*, in word and tongue—in *power*, in deed and truth. Of the former it is intended in Galatians—as we have all put him on when we were baptized. Of the latter in Romans—oh that we would all be persuaded so to put him on.

Show, I. What of Christ is the garment that we must put on.

II. What are the properties of Christ as a garment; what kind of garment he is.

III. Why and how we are to put him on.

I. What of Christ is the garment that we must put on.

Two things in Christ are the garment: His merit and righteousness; we must *put on* this for our justification. His spirit and grace; we must *put on* this for our sanctification.

Justification and sanctification are our two great concernments. It is necessary that we be justified, and that we be sanctified. Now neither of these can possibly be had otherwise than by putting on Christ. There is no justification but by his merit, no sanctification but by his Spirit. See 1 Cor. vi. 11. And therefore should we not, by all means, put him on?

1. His merit and righteousness for justification. Justification hath two things in it:

(1.) Acquitting us from guilt. We have all sinned; have we not? Yes. And is not God thereby offended? Yes. And must he not be atoned, and pacified; his justice satisfied? Yes. But how? By any thing that we ourselves can do or suffer? No. By any thing that any of our fellow-creatures can? No. How then? Only by the dying and rising again of the blessed Jesus; "who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

1. iv. 25. His blood alone satisfies and pacifies; efore, his blood alone justifies. And that blood ıe garment that we must *put on*, else no atone- ıt. *Put it on!* What is that? hear, talk, of it? No. ıd by, and look upon it? No. Hearing of clothes ot putting on clothes; looking at clothes is not. here,

o put him on, is to receive and apply him to our- es by a true and lively faith. Believing him both : and willing to redeem and save me, and there- n coming to him, and closing with him; and upon so doing, persuading myself that God for his e doth forgive me, and thereupon comforting self; being of good cheer. It is called receiving atonement, Rom. v. 1, 9—11. Till this be done soul is naked in the sight of God, *the shame of nakedness appears*; that is, thy sins are all upon score: thou art guilty, and God is angry, and if u shouldst die in that condition thou wilt be cer- ıly lost, and that for ever. Doth it not concern then to *put on Christ*, to believe in him for justi- tion from the guilt of sin.

2.) Accepting of us as righteous. Some will have ı to be no part of our justification, but the former y. I think justification includes this also, accord- to the definition in the catechism,* "Wherein *pardons* all our sins and *accepts of us*, as righteous his sight." This Paul says he laboured in, 2 Cor. ). Now how may this be? Eph. i. 6. *In the beloved;* t is, in Christ, through his merit and righteousness ne. He hath not only prevailed by what he did and fered, and is doing, for us that we may be forgiven, l not come into condemnation; but, moreover, t we may come into favour, be loved and owned, kissed and embraced, our persons accepted, our formances accepted. And how? for any worth or rthiness that is in us or them? No; only in his me. and for his sake, and through his merit; in ler to which we must put him on, as Jacob put the clothes of his brother Esau, Gen. xxvii. 15. en he came for the blessing. Jacob was in no ılt; he did not come for a pardon: no, he came for ılessing; but unless he had put on Esau's clothes had not had that blessing; but having them on had it: "And he came near, and kissed him: d he smelled the smell of his raiment, and bless- him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the ell of a field which the Lord hath blessed," *v.* 27. here, we must put on the Lord Jesus Christ, that his merit and righteousness; we must come in his me; we must plead what he hath done and suffered us, as our elder brother: and then—See, *the smell of ı son;* and then—a *blessing*, else none; "*Therefore* ɔd give thee of the dew of heaven and of the earth," 28. See, also, in the story concerning Joseph and s brethren, Gen. xlii. 20; xliii. 5. No Benjamin, no corn. Now our Benjamin is Christ, or rather, God's Benjamin, *his* Son, our Brother. In him he is well pleased, and in him *only*, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. If we come without him we come without our errand.

2. His Spirit and grace for our sanctification. Besides the clothes we are to appear in before God, which are Christ's righteousness alone, there are clothes also that we must appear in before men; yes, and before God too; and those are Christ's Spirit and grace; the new nature, the divine nature. We must be *new creatures*, 2 Cor. v. 17. New within, and new without; new in heart, and new in life; *putting off the old man, and putting on the new*, Eph. iv. 24. Now that new man is Christ. If we have not his Spirit, we are none of his, Rom. viii. 9. Him, therefore, and his Spirit we must put on; his image and likeness: being as he was, (Heb. vii. 26.) holy; doing as he did; walking as he walked, 1 John ii. 6. Note how it comes in here, Rom. xiii. 12, 13. *Cast off the works of darkness*, rioting, drunkenness; and put on—what? sobriety, temperance? no; but, all in one—the Lord Jesus Christ,—*Jesus*, the Saviour; *Christ*, anointed to be so; *Lord*, to rule you.

II. What kind of garment is the Lord Jesus Christ?

It is a great matter, especially with some, what kind of clothes we wear; that they be tight and fashionable, and according to our rank and quality; rather above it than under it, or below it, or short of it: and most commonly those that are most curious and concerned about the clothing of their bodies, are least curious and concerned what clothes their souls have; it is to them no matter what rags, what filthy rags, they appear in, both before God and man.

Behold, I bring you tidings this day of brave clothes, which may be yours, if you will—each of you—for the putting on. And those are, the *Lord Jesus Christ;* his merit and righteousness to justify you; his Spirit and grace to sanctify you. What say you? Will you accept of them, will you have them, put them on, wear them?

Tell us, first, what are their properties, that should commend them to us?

In general—In Luke xv. 22. it is called the *best* robe. Best indeed; no other is to be compared with it. Brown bread and the gospel are good fare; rags and Christ's righteousness are good clothing. It is first in worth and excellency, and first in order of time—though not as to our persons, yet as to our nature, in Adam.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is a costly garment; the dearest and most costly garment that ever was. We may judge of its excellency by its price. Some people are extraordinarily profuse about their clothes; and are cautioned against it, 1 Tim. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 3.

* Commonly called the Assembly's Catechism, being agreed upon by the assembly of Divines at Westminster, A. D. 1643.

Lo, here is a costly robe indeed; not to us that must wear it, (it costs us nothing but the accepting and putting it on,) but to him that made and prepared it; it cost him dear. Ere the Lord Jesus Christ could be a suit of clothes for thy soul—to justify, sanctify, save thee, he must be made a man. And so he was. He must die the death of the cross. And so he did. We read, Gen. xxxvii. of Joseph's brethren dipping their brother's coat in a goat's blood, and sending it to their father; but our Joseph dipt the coat that was to be for us in *his own* blood, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. And doth not this commend it to you? He clothed himself with the rags of our nature, that he might clothe us with the robe of his grace: nay, more than that—he was made sin for us, a curse for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. Gal. iii. 13.

2. He is a comely garment. There are some persons whose clothes, in the eyes of sober men, are very uncomely; disfiguring, rather than adorning, the body; discovering, rather than hiding, their shame. But here is a garment comely indeed, beautiful, and lovely, and glorious; a garment that makes the soul that hath it on amiable towards God: he is pleased with it, and accepts of it.

The imputed righteousness of Christ doth so. The implanted righteousness is called *grace*, that is, beauty. See what is said of one particular grace, 1 Pet. iii. 4, 5. Could we but see a soul out of Christ, that hath not put him on yet, what guilt and filth it lies under, what dirty rags it hath on; we should wonder how it could endure itself, much more how the pure and Holy God doth endure it; especially, coming so near him as sometimes they do in holy ordinances, Amos v. 21. "*I will not smell* in your solemn assemblies." See Ezek. xvi. where is set forth, both our miserable, loathsome condition by nature, *v.* 4—8. and our lovely, amiable condition by grace, *v.* 10—14. though what is said is meant chiefly of their church privileges.

3. He is a large garment. The righteousness of Christ for justification is so. He is able to save to the uttermost. There is in him merit enough to satisfy for all thy sins, to pay all thy debts. He has incense enough to perfume all thy services. What is said of the bed, Isa. xxviii. 20. is true of all the garments—of all our own righteousness—they are too short and too narrow; thy nakedness appears through them.

The Spirit and grace of Christ for sanctification is so. As he forgives all thy iniquities, and hath wherewithal, so he will heal all thy diseases, mortify all thy corruptions. There is a perfection of parts in sanctification: the *whole* man is renewed, though not yet *wholly*, 1 Thess. v. 23. but as light in a morning—all the sky over.

4. He is a lasting garment, nay, everlasting. The Israelites had clothes that lasted forty years, and did not wax old; that was a great while, Deut. viii. 4. But here is a garment which lasts for ever.

The righteousness of Christ for justification is *everlasting* righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. There is a fountain of it that cannot be drawn dry—not a cistern, a laver, Zech. xiii. As long as we shall last sinning, the righteousness of Christ will last satisfying. Abuse not this, at your peril. Rom. vi. 1. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.

The grace of Christ is lasting too. Where it is in truth it is in perseverance. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing," Ps. xcii. 13, 14. We read of two sorts of clothes, Gen. iii.—One, of Adam and Eve's making—aprons of fig leaves, *v.* 7. Another, of God's making—coats of skins, *v.* 21. There is a great deal of difference in warmth and in duration. The former may represent our own righteousness, the latter Christ's. The beasts whose skins were used died.

5. He is a white garment; he is expressly said to be so, Rev. iii. 18. When the angels appeared at any time in human shape, that was the colour their clothes were of, Mark xvi. 5. Acts i. 10. So, when our Lord was transfigured, Matt. xvii. 2. The whiteness signifies two things:

(1.) Innocency and purity. Every justified person clothed with Christ's righteousness is, as it were, innocent before God, Ps. xxvi. 6. So the sanctified are in comparison with others, and it is their duty to labour to be so more and more.

(2.) Joy and gladness, Eccl. ix. 8. He that hath put on Christ, and is accepted of God, hath reason to rejoice all the days of his life; and he ought to do so, Phil. iv. 4. Isa. lxi. 10.

The woman which John saw, Rev. xii. 1. was clothed with the sun: a shining garment indeed. The priests under the law were clothed in white linen garments; and see Rev. xix. 8. "The fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

6. He is the wedding garment; of such we read, Matt. xxii. 12. It is to be understood of Christ's righteousness imputed. There is no welcome with God without it. It is to be understood, also, of his Spirit and grace implanted; a suitable frame of heart to gospel privileges. Put on Christ, and thou hast that. And shall not all this prevail to make you in love with it?

III. How must we put on Christ?

Three things must be done.

1. There must be a work of conviction wrought upon thy soul. Thou must see thy need of this clothing. Most people, as Laodicea, say, they have need of nothing, and alas! they have need of every thing; particularly of good clothes, for they are *naked*. A sinful condition is a naked condition.

Thy body is perhaps well enough clothed, decently and warm; but thy soul is naked, and destitute, and exposed; dirty, and has nothing to hide it.

2. All that will have these fine clothes must come to Christ, and buy them, Rev. iii. 18. Isa. lv. 1. In buying, there is parting with one thing and receiving another. Canst thou find in thy heart to part with thy rags in exchange for these good clothes? the rags of thy sins, Rom. xiii. 12—14. Eph. iv. 22—24. the rags of thy own righteousness, Isa. lxv. 6. See Zech. iii. 3, 4. Were such an offer made thee concerning other clothes, how gladly would it be accepted!

3. Having bought them, that is, made the bargain, and consented to the terms of having them, we must put them on, and wear them. Not as a hat, to put off to every one we meet; not as a cloak, to be worn only when we go abroad; but as thy inner garment, to be worn next thee; an upper garment; and, above all these, as thy entire garment. Christ must be thy all in all; thy day-clothes, thy night-clothes: put him on daily and duly, constantly and continually. It is a good meditation, when we are putting on our clothes, we must put on bowels of mercies, Col. iii. 12. charity, v. 15. humility, 1 Peter v. 5. meekness, 1 Pet. iii. 4. or, which includes all, *the Lord Jesus Christ*. If so, when we die we shall put on better clothes of glory. Christ will never put them off that put him on.

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## SERMON V.

CHRIST IS THE HEAD, THE CHURCH IS HIS BODY.

COLOSSIANS i. 18.

*And he is the head of the body, the church.*

THE union between Christ and his church is twofold: 1. Relative; like that between persons that are in relation mutually one towards another. Of which kind we have had an account * of fourteen—as he is their Husband, Father, Brother, Friend, Master, Teacher, King, Captain, Physician, Advocate, Shepherd, Bishop, Inhabitant, Keeper. 2. Real. Of which kind there are several: this is the first.

DOCT. That the Lord Jesus Christ is the head, and his church the body.

There is such a kind of union between them and such a kind of relation, as is between the head and the body. Bodies are of several sorts, whereof each have their several head.

1. There is the body politic. And so a kingdom is a body; and the head of that body is the king, Psalm cx. 6. The church is a spiritual kingdom; the head and king of it, in that sense, is Christ.

2. There is the body natural, and that hath a head joined to it; and one and the same living soul animating that head, and that body, they make together one living man. So here; the head is Christ; the body is the Church. The living soul, which is one, and still the same, animating this head and this body, is the Spirit. So that Christ and his church, being endued with one and the same Spirit, make together one mystical body, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.

What church is this meant of? Whether is it—the church visible, consisting of all those good and bad that profess faith in Christ and obedience to him; or—the church invisible, called the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven, including those only that are called, and chosen, and faithful, and excluding others? I answer: Both, in a different sense, are to be reckoned Christ's body, and Christ the head of both.

1. In respect of *external rule and government*. So Christ is the head of the church visible, and the church visible is his body: nay, he is head of every man, 1 Cor. xi. 3.

All that call themselves Christians do profess, at least in word and tongue, to own the Scriptures as the rule of faith and manners; and what they declare we are to believe concerning God, that, they say, they do believe; and what the Scriptures declare to be duty required of man, that they say they will do.

And this profession makes them members at large of the great body the church, Gal. iii. 27. "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ," that is, put on the profession of Christ. And we may plead it with them accordingly. Are not you a Christian baptized into Christ? How dare you then to carry it at this rate?

2. In respect of *vital influence*. So he is the head of the church invisible only; nay, only of those in it that are effectually called. Though the elect not yet called are to be reckoned his, and he theirs, in purpose and decree, yet none but such to whom it is actually given to receive him to themselves, and to give themselves to him, (Hos. i. 11.) *appointing to themselves one head*—making it their own act and deed, are to be considered his body.

As in the natural body, besides the integral parts, such as hands, arms, legs, back, breast, &c. which make the body, there are oftentimes wens, warts, moles, and other excrescences, which are covered over with the same skin, and are fed and nourished, after a sort, with the same nourishment, and yet are not true parts or members of the body; so it is here, there are many that stick, as it were, to the body of Christ, covered over with the same skin of profession,

* Alluding to a course of sermons preached by him on the subject.

partake in the same ordinances, and yet after all are but wens, and warts, and moles. They are no living members; they have no true union, nor any true communion, with the Lord Jesus; they are amongst us, but not of us; and the day is coming, when they shall be made manifest. On which account the gospel is compared to a net. See Matt. xiii. 47—50.

There are but two heads of all mankind—Christ and the devil. If thou art not a member of Christ, thou art a limb of the devil, that spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. O tremble at the thought of it; for yourself; for your near and dear relations, your children; and make sure your true union with Christ as your head; make sure that you have his Spirit.

Show, I. What kind of head Christ is.

II. What kind of body the church is.

III. What kind of members of that body we should every one of us be.

I. What kind of head is Christ?

This I shall lay before you in several particulars.

1. Christ is to his church the only sovereign and supreme head. The head hath the pre-eminence in the body; it is placed by nature uppermost, and all the rest of the members below it. The Lord Jesus is uppermost, above all, and *over all*, Rom. ix. 5. It follows here, *that in all things he might have the pre-eminence:* the pre-eminence is his above all persons in all things, Psalm xlv. 2. Cant. v. 10. It is our duty then in all things to give him that which is his due. Let nothing rob him of it; Psalm cxxxvii. 6. "If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy"—Hebrew—*the head of my joy*. Make the Lord Jesus the head of your love, hope, desire, delight. Many stand in competition with him, as the world, sin, self, the devil. Also, the Antichrist. He styles himself the head of the church universal, but it is a usurpation. The church hath no head but Christ; no ministerial head: none is deputed by him for that office, himself alone being sufficient for it.

We do acknowledge, in a sense, the supreme magistrate may be styled the head, that is, the governor in external matters of that part of the church which is in his dominions; as the head of the woman is said to be the man, 1 Cor. xi. 3. that is, her superior to rule over her in the Lord. But *such* a Governor of the *universal* church we know none.

2. Christ is a suitable head; a head suitable to the body of which he is head. The body hath the human nature, therefore, so hath he, Heb. ii. 14. It was necessary it should be so, that the same nature that sinned might suffer. We may here take occasion to adore the infinite wisdom of the Father, that contrived this way, and the infinite love of the Son, that would stoop so low, Ps. viii. 4. 5.

3. Christ is a supplying head. He nourishes and cherishes, Eph. v. 29. 30. The head in the body supplies the body with two things especially;

*With spirits.* It is the seat of spirits, from whence they are derived to all the parts as there is need and occasion. The Lord Jesus is said to have the seven spirits, Rev. iii. 1. that is, abundance of the Spirit;—compare John iii. 34. Col. i. 19. Eph. i. 23.—and that to communicate, ch. i. 16. Ps. cxxxiii. 2. To him, therefore, we must have recourse.

*With guidance and direction.* The office of the head is to show the body whither to go, and what to do: there the eyes are seated, as in a watch tower. See Rev. v. 6. *Seven eyes.* Whereinsoever we have need at any time of guidance, we must look to him, as Paul, Heb. xii. 6. and we have a promise, Ps. xxxii. 8. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

4. A sympathizing head. He is such a head as hath a fellow-feeling with all his true members, even the meanest of them, in all the evils that befall them. In the evils of temptation, Heb. ii. 17, 18. iv. 15, 16. In the evils of affliction, Isa. lxiii. 9. In the evils of persecution, Acts ix. 4. When the toe was but trod upon, the head cried out, Why persecutest thou me? This affords great comfort and encouragement, good ground of hope that he will arise for their rescue, Isa. lxiii. 9. Also in their joys and comforts, Matt. xxv. 40.

5. A safe head. If a man be fallen into a pit of water, as long as his head is kept above, he is safe. Whatsoever befalls the body, the head is above, out of the reach of gun-shot. It is well for him, it is well for us, that it is so. Men may strike at his headship, but "why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion," Ps. ii. 1. 6. Christ is far above "all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come," Eph. i. 21.

6. A saving head. Being safe himself he will in due time make us safe too, Eph. v. 23. He is Jesus, Matt. i. 21.—*a Saviour*. It is his *prayer* "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." John xvii. 24. Though the head and members are parted a while, yet they shall be together for ever. Salvation is either personal, or public; temporal, spiritual, or eternal; according as the evils are that do encompass us; sins, sorrows, temptations. 2 Tim. iv. 18—"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." In the head are the eyes, to spy dangers; the mouth, to speak for help; the wisdom and understanding, to contrive which way to effect it.

II. What kind of body is the church?

1. It is a great body. This appears if we consider those only that are called, and chosen, and faithful; though who those be is not, and cannot be, infallibly known to us. Even they, at this day, now living in the world, are not a few but many. Indeed, comparatively, compared with them that perish, the Scripture says of them, they are but a little little flock; yet in themselves they are many. And the Lord make them a hundred-fold more than they are.

It appears also, if we consider the whole professing body of Christians, that are baptized into the faith of Christ. Then they are a great many more.

And it appears further, if we consider all that have been, and are, and shall be, as met together with their head in glory. See what account the Scripture gives of them, Rev. vii. 9. "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Therefore there is no reason why any should stumble at the paucity or fewness of the people of God.

2. It is a growing body. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," Isa. ix. 7. There are many promises in the word to this purpose which have had, and have, and shall have, their accomplishment. Growth is two-fold:

(1.) Extensive. When more are added. More to the number of the elect, we believe, are not to be added. They who teach, "If thou art not predestinated, pray that thou mayst be predestinated," do certainly miss it; but to the number of the called, there may be more added, (Acts ii. 47.) with a common call, with an effectual call; and our duty is to pray heartily every day that we may be so.

(2.) Intensive. When those that are already good, and are in the body, are made better; better in heart, and better in life. This is often promised as a mercy, and as often commended as a duty, Mal. iv. 2. Prov. iv. 18. 2 Pet. iii. 18. 2 Pet. i. 5—8.

3. It is a divided body. The more is the pity, but so it is. A great part of it is divided from the head. I mean, not in respect of unity of spirit and affection; so all the true members are near to him, and he is near to them; but in respect of place and condition. He is in heaven above, they are on the earth beneath; and it is their grief and burthen that it is so; and, therefore, they pray, and long, and wait till it be otherwise, Phil. i. 23. Rev. xxii.

It is also divided, sadly divided, within itself; not divided from the wicked of the world only, that is a division that must be, but the body within itself; Christian against Christian, church against church; nay, I would I might not say, saint against saint. But then, observe, it is not in fundamental matters; all are agreed to love God, and hate sin, and believe in Jesus Christ, and keep the commandments. The difference lies in some lesser matters; as that between Paul and Barnabas about John Mark going along with them; Paul and Peter about eating or not eating with the Gentiles; about meats and days, wherein the kingdom of God consists not.

And the truth is, the evil lies more in the mismanagement of their differences than in the differences themselves. The fault is, either despising or judging. There is hope the Lord in due time will mend this matter, as Christ hath prayed, John xvii.

4. It is a distempered body. This is one reason of the former; therefore so divided because so distempered. If it were not for the distempers that are in the body, there would be no such divisions in the body, James iv. 12. 1 Cor. iii. 1—3. The distempers that prevail are, ignorance, darkness, want and weakness of judgment in the understanding, which cause error and mistake; also pride, passion, self-love, ambition, covetousness. These are the diseases of this great body. The man of sin with his great lie, the whore with her fornication cup, hath deceived, deluded, intoxicated the nations; and when they will come to themselves, and be thoroughly sober, God only knows.

5. It is a persecuted body. Look how it was with the natural body of our Lord Jesus, when he was here upon earth; even just so it is, and hath been, with his mystical body: he was scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crowned with thorns, torn with nails, speared with spears, nailed to the cross; even so hath it been with his followers. We may wonder, the enemies of it being so many, mighty, and malicious, that they have not made an utter end of it before this time. That complaint of the Psalmist, Ps. iii. 1. may well be the whole church's complaint, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me." But why doth the head suffer it to be so, when it is certainly in the power of his hand to help it? I answer, there is good reason for it, else it should not be. He knows how to make it work for good to them, and for glory to himself.

6. It shall be a prevailing body: allusion to Gen. xlix. 23, 24. See Zech. xii. 1, 3, 6.

Not a member shall perish: a good argument for the perseverance of saints. Lord, if in thy book all my members are written, much more are all thine.

The body natural was so, in its glorious transfiguration, resurrection, ascension, coronation in glory; and so in its kind, and measure, and time, shall the body mystical be also, Isa. xxvi. 19. See Ezek. xxxvii.

III. What kind of members of this body should we be?

*As to ourselves;* we must look to it,

1. That we be true members, that we have true union with this blessed head; and that must be by a true and lively faith, accepting of him and

giving ourselves to him, Eph. iii. 17. Is this done? Is it done in deed and in truth? I beseech you, see to it; many are tied to Christ by an outward profession, that are not grafted into him. There may be glass eyes, and wooden legs fastened by art to the body, and those wooden legs may have silk stockings, and yet they are not of the body. So *as* to ourselves. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven," Matt. vii. 21.

2. That we be thriving members. If a member in the body do not grow, it is a sign something is amiss in it, Col. ii. 6. 1 Thess. iv. 1. This is one end wherefore the means of grace are afforded to us, Eph. iv. 11—15. They do grow indeed that do grow up into Christ the head more and more; into his merit, into his Spirit, for justification, for sanctification. Yet note, Every part hath a proportionable measure of growth, though what that is we know not, and therefore, we are still to be pressing forward.

*As to our head;* our duty stands in,

1. Subjection. If he be our head we must be subject to him in all things: our will subject to his will in doing, in suffering. What he appoints concerning his day, his worship, his discipline, we are readily and cheerfully to submit to; taking his yoke upon us. Though commands be hard and uneasy to the carnal part, are they his commands? If so, we must obey. So also for providences,—"And Jesus said unto them all, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me," Luke ix. 23.

2. Similitude. The members ought to be like the head. In Dan. ii. we read of an image, whose head was gold, and the members silver, brass, iron, nay clay. It must not be so in Christ's body,—"If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son," Rom. viii. 9, 29. See how the apostle argues as to this: "Know ye not, that your members are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!" 1 Cor. vi. 15. O think, when a temptation to sin comes, is this to be like Christ? Was Christ passionate, or revengeful, or covetous?

3. Sympathy. As the head sympathizes with the members, so the members sympathize with the head. If a blow be offered at the head, the hand will venture a cut to save it. Are we affected with the dishonour done to the Lord Jesus by the wickedness that abounds in the midst of us? do we lay it to heart? do we feel the contempt cast upon his name, his gospel, his ministers, his people? The Psalmist could say, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me," Ps. lxix. 9.

*As to our fellow-members;* our duty stands in these seven things:

1. Charity, brotherly kindness, and love towards them all. All the members in the natural body love one another; so should all the members in the mystical body: and that love must be unfeigned, and without dissimulation, Rom. xii. 9, 10.

2. Care not to hurt any of them in word or deed. Eph. iv. 25. *Lie not.* Why? *because members one of another.* The hand will not take a knife and cut the leg or the foot; nor will the teeth bite the arm; no, not though accidentally hurt; there is no revenge. So should it be among Christians, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves," Rom. xii. 19. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; but if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another," Gal. v. 14, 15.

3. Contentment in that place in the body in which God hath set us, though a mean and low place. Not envying those that are above us, or are preferred before us, in parts, gifts, estate, employment. Gal. v. 26. The foot envies not the hand, nor the leg the arm, because the hand and the arm are nearer the head.

4. Condescension. If we be in a high place in the body, we should be condescending to those that are below: not slighting, despising, or undervaluing. 1 Cor. xii. 21, 22. Rom. xii. 16. 1 Pet. v. 5.

5. Compassion towards all. We are to weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that rejoice. The members in the natural body do so, 1 Cor. xii. 26. Heb. xiii. 3. *In the body* mystical it should be so.

6. Communion, free and frequent. In the natural body the members are always together. We cannot be so in the body mystical: our condition is a scattered condition, till gathered together in heaven. 2 Thess. ii. 1. 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. But it should be the case as much as may be, Heb. x. 25.

7. Communication. Whatever each member hath it hath it not for itself, but for the body. The eye, the ear, the hand, are not for themselves merely; so it should be with the body mystical, not every man for himself, but for others also, Phil. ii. 4, 21. Eph. iv. 16. Hereby also we may try ourselves, whether we are true members.

## SERMON VI.

### CHRIST IS OUR HOPE.

1 TIMOTHY i. 1. latter part.

*And the Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.*

DOES any one inquire, What is Christ to us? I reply, He is our foundation—our food—our root—our raiment—our head—and our hope. Hope hath in Scripture two significations:

1. It signifies the *grace of hope*, which is the expectation of some good thing to come; Prov. x. 28. "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness;" that is, their hoping hath a good issue. And it signifies,

2. *The object of hope.* So in the text.

DOCT. That the Lord Jesus Christ is a Christian's hope—the object of his hope.

All the good that we look for, we do and look for only from, by, and through, our Lord Jesus Christ. Others may possibly make other things the object of their hope, but we must make the Lord Jesus Christ alone the object of our hope. I shall

Show, I. What the things are that we do hope for by, from, and through Jesus Christ.

II. What in Christ we do make the grounds of that hope.

III. What the success of that hope is, and how we are like to speed in it.

IV. Whence it is that we speed so well.

V. Make application.

I. What are the things that we hope for by, from, and through our Lord Jesus Christ?

They are in general of two sorts:

1. Things that concern the life that now is, that pertain to the body, and to the outward man. We have occasion for these, and shall have, while we are in the body. Now which way must we look for them? who must be our hope? Not any creature, one or other; not second causes; if they be, they will deceive and disappoint us; but our Lord Jesus Christ himself alone. Every good man says, *He* is my hope, Prov. xviii. 10, 11. Psalm lii. 7; xx. 7, 8. It sweetens all such mercies, that they come from, and through, such a good hand. We must exercise this hope,

(1.) In all our wants and necessities, for supply of them. If we want food, raiment, rain, fair weather, success in business, health from sickness, ease from pain, he alone must be our hope; and if he be so, he will see to us, Psalm xxiii. 1; xxxiv. 10; xxxvii. 3. Luke xxii. 35.

(2.) In all our perils and dangers; for preservation from them, for preservation through them, Ps. iii. 5, 6; xxiii. 4. When the ship was sinking wherein Paul was:—See the narrative, Acts xxvii. 22, &c.

(3.) In all our straits and troubles; for support under them, for deliverance out of them, Ps. xxxiv. 19; lv. 22.

(4.) Concerning our children after us, when we are gone, Ps. xxvii. 10. Jer. xlix. 11.

(5.) In reference to public affairs, that he will fight our battles for us, and give us victory over all our enemies. See Josh. v. 13.

2. Things that concern the life that is to come—spiritual things, eternal things. For these, also, our hope must be in Christ, and in him only; 2 Pet. i. 3. "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life," namely, life present, "and godliness." For,

The grace itself that makes us godly is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is he that sanctifies, his Spirit that regenerates; Heb. xii. 2. "*The Author* and Finisher of our faith;" the gold is his, and the eyesalve his.

The forgiveness of our sins and the justification of our persons, is through Christ, Rom. v. 1; viii. 1. Eph. i. 7.

The acceptation of our services—audience for our prayers, is for his sake, 1 Pet. ii. 5. John xvi. 23.

So ability and strength both for doing and suffering. We can do nothing further than he enables, John xv. 5. nothing; nor undergo any thing if his arm be not under us.

A blessing upon ordinances is through his presence with us in them, Matt. xviii. 20; xxviii. 20.

Victory over spiritual enemies, corruptions, temptations, the devil, the world, the flesh, is through him, Rom. viii. 37.

The pouring out the Spirit as a Comforter, is on his account, John xiv. 16.

So persevering grace is from him: it is by his power we are kept, 1 Pet. i. 3.

A safe and comfortable passage out of this into the other world, is the effect of his presence, Ps. xxiii. 4. He will send his angels, Luke xvi. 22. And, when we come thither, good entertainment there,—that we shall be acknowledged and acquitted, that he will say, Well done—give us a place in his kingdom, Matt. x. 32. Jude 24. John xiv. 2, 3.

The raising up of our bodies at the last day is because of him, John xi. 25. "I am the resurrection." And this is promised, John vi. 39, 40. But how? See 1 Cor. xv. 42—44.

Soul and body shall be together in eternal happiness, with all the saints and with the Lord; and here is the top-stone of the great building. And is this by Christ? Yes: by Christ. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," 1 Cor. xv. 19. *In this life*, but not in this life only, else, of all creatures most miserable. Now all these together are great things. Then,

(1.) The saints of God are people of great hopes, that look for all this. They are great dealers; they

trade not, as the men of the world do, for pebbles, but for rich pearls; for a kingdom, an eternal kingdom. O that all such would learn to carry it accordingly, that it might appear by their behaviour in every thing, that they are of a great spirit, and of great designs, as Moses, Heb. xi. 24—26.

(2.) The Lord Jesus Christ is a great Saviour, that hath wherewithal to answer the hopes of such abundance of people, trusting to him and expecting from him, to be made thus happy by him, and to have all this from him. We may wonder whence the king hath to maintain such armies, and whence to reward his friends that are faithful to him, and do him service, but how much more cause to wonder whence the Lord Jesus Christ hath to reward his faithful servants.

(3.) The men of the world are great fools, that when such a great happiness may be had, in the heavenly Canaan, they prefer the onions and garlic of Egypt before it; as the old Israelites did, despising the pleasant land, Ps. cvi. 24. a sin that God did never forgive them, but charged it upon them, so that their carcasses fell in the wilderness. And the case is the very same as to those that despise the grace of the gospel, and the rich offers of life and salvation by Jesus Christ, Heb. ii. 3; iii. 17; iv. 1.

II. What in Jesus Christ do we make the grounds of our hope touching all these things.

There is ground enough and enough, again and again. We know whom we have trusted, and in whom we have hoped; and why, in Heb. vi. 19, 20. Hope is there compared to an anchor, the use whereof is to keep the ship steady in storms. What kind of anchor? Sure and stedfast, not weak and wavering. How so? It *enters within*, fastens upon Christ in heaven; not upon mud or sand, or other loose ground, but upon a rock, Isa. xxviii. 16.

Three things we have in him to bottom our hopes upon:

1. The price he has paid to procure and purchase them: that was, his own blood; a price sufficient, a price accepted by the Father. They are all bought and paid for, yea, and paid for to the full worth and value of them. If a friend of ours have purchased an estate for us, we feel confidence. Behold a friend, "who though he was rich became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," 2 Cor. viii. 9. Have we not then good grounds for hope? nay, for joy in hope? Rom. v. 2.

2. The promise he hath made to bestow it. There is nothing of all these blessings and benefits, but what he hath expressly told us in his holy word, shall be certainly conferred upon us, if we will believe in him, and be ruled by him, Matt. xii. 28, 29. John x. 28. But may we trust him? Is he faithful? Will he not deceive us? I answer, There is no danger. Hadst thou as many souls as thou hast hairs upon thy head, thou mightest venture them all upon his bare word; but for our more abundant consolation we have his *oath*, Heb. vi. 18. his bond with two seals, Rom. iv. 11. And shall we yet distrust hope?

3. His being present always at the right hand of the Father, making intercession, that he may see it all done accordingly, Heb. vii. 25. If a legacy be left me by a dear friend, and he trust executors with it that are false, I may lose it that way, notwithstanding his good intention—as with many an orphan; but there is no danger of that here. Our Lord himself hath so ordered the matter that he is his own executor. Then certainly he will see his will performed: then we have good ground of hope if able to make out our title.

III. How are we likely to speed in our hopes?

Many hope for great things, and fall short. Here there is no danger, "Hope maketh not ashamed"—their hope, Rom. v. 5.—the grace of hope, or the object of hope—Jesus Christ; neither of them *make them ashamed;* that is, they are sure not to be disappointed, they shall certainly have the things they look for. The reason follows, namely, either God's love to them, in the sense of it, *shed abroad in our hearts*, or their love to God. Because he loves them and they love him, therefore no disappointment. I dare challenge all the ages of the world, and all the records of time, and all the people that ever lived upon the face of the earth, to produce one instance of one person that made the Lord Jesus Christ rightly and truly his hope, that was disappointed; disappointed of pardon, peace, acceptance with God, and eternal life at last; or, disappointed as to the things of this life, unless they hoped amiss. Our rule in hoping, is to hope *according to the promise*: else we may hope amiss. The promise being with proviso, as far as for God's glory and our good. such must the hope be, Ps. xci. 10.—no evil shall befall, Ps. xxxiv. 10—no good wanting.

IV. Whence is it we may be so certain we shall not be disappointed, if the Lord Jesus Christ be our hope?

Because he is what he is according to these three titles given here to him:

1. He is Jesus a Saviour, one raised up on purpose to bring people to heaven. The very name encourages hope.

2. He is Lord; Jehovah, blessed for ever; King of kings and Lord of lords; almighty in power: able to save: other hopes are weak and unable.

3. He is Christ; anointed of God to be both Lord and Jesus; him hath God the Father sealed, that is, commissioned under hand and seal, and also fitted every way for the undertaking, Acts x. 38.

V. What use should we make of this?

1. Then if Christless, we are hopeless, Eph. ii. 12. Not absolutely, but while remaining in that state. For let me ask, What is thy hope? I mean especially touching the main matter, thy eternal salvation.

last thou ever any thoughts about it?—It is for the most part grounded upon a purposed repentance and reformation hereafter, on our part, and on God's part, a little mercy, which a good God will not deny, or a good man would not. This is all that the most trust to; but this will certainly deceive, Job xxvii. 8. Prov. xi. 7. Matt. vii. 24—27. It hath deceived thousands, and will thee.

2. Then saints are blessed; for the Lord Jesus Christ is their hope, Ps. cxlvi. 5. Why then not comforted, having such things in hope, in reversion; besides in hand, in possession?

3. Then try your hopes, and be sure they be right, else expect disappointment. How were they wrought? If born with thee, and you never did otherwise than hope, suspect that hope. The foundation of *good* hope is laid in a kind of despair;—no hope in the way I am in, therefore I must have a better foundation. How do they work? Is it in a constant care to please God—fear to offend him? then they are right, Acts xxvi. 7. Do they lead to self-purifying? 1 John iii. 3. Do they produce love to the Lord Jesus? It cannot be otherwise if you have a good hope.

4. Exhortation to all to make Christ alone their hope, renouncing all other, Ps. lxxiii. 25. especially thy own righteousness, Phil. iii. 7, 8.

5. Caution. Do not say there is no hope; for, blessed be God, there is while Christ lives.

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## SERMON VII.

### HE IS OUR REFUGE.

HEB. vi. 18.

*Who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*

THESE words are a description of true believers, such to whom belong the *strong consolation;* that is, who ought to be greatly comforted. They are such as have fled for *refuge* to lay hold on the hope set before them. The same that is the *hope* is the *refuge*, namely, Jesus Christ, and his undertaking for us. True believers are such as fly to him—for two reasons:

1. In reference to what is to come, to lay hold on the *hope* set before them; that is, the hope laid for them in heaven, Col. i. 5. and *set before* them in the gospel, together with all the benefits purchased for them in their way thither.

2. In reference to what is present. They fly to him for *refuge* every day, and they have need so to do.

DOCT. That the Lord Jesus Christ is a Christian's refuge, to whom he must fly every day.

Show, I. What is meant by refuge.

II. What need we have of a refuge every day.

III. What kind of refuge Jesus Christ is.

IV. What it is to fly to him for refuge, and what should move us so to do.

I. What is meant by a refuge? A *refuge* is that which men are wont in times of trouble or danger to betake themselves to, for safety or supply, promising themselves that there they shall have it. Refuges are of two sorts.

The one *personal*. Sometimes there are such and such persons in whom we confide, and from whom we expect shelter, a near and dear relation, a trusty faithful friend. We call him our refuge, and make him so, if we want any thing, if any thing ail us. Jonathan was David's refuge in his flight from Saul. Jephtha was the Gileadites' refuge, Judg. xi. Magistrates are the poor man's refuge, the shields of the earth.

The other *real*. There are things that are our refuge; as, in time of war, a strong castle or walled town; there we conclude we shall be safe. Against want: The rich man's wealth is his strong city, Prov. xviii. 11. In case of guilt and justice pursuing: Joab fled to the horns of the altar; that was his refuge. The Jews, by God's appointment, had six cities of refuge, to which the manslayer was to fly. Now to these the apostle is supposed here especially to allude. As they had their refuges, so have we; theirs were so many cities, but ours is one Christ.

II. What need have we of a refuge every day? We need a refuge on a four-fold account:

1. Guilt contracted. We are sinning daily, besides old scores. The avenger of blood, that is, God's offended justice, is in pursuit of us, at our very heels, though we see him not. If he overtake us before we get into Christ we are undone. If we trust to other refuges, if we take hold of the horns of any other altar, he will pluck us thence, as they did Joab, and away we must go to execution. It is for every sin that this is our case; for the law says, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. O what need have we then to bethink ourselves!

2. Temptations assaulting. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are all busy, by fair means, by foul, by allurements, by affrightments; setting upon us, to draw us *from* God and duty, *to* sin and folly. Temptations are sometimes of one kind, sometimes of another. Now the query is, Where is our refuge? whither go we for strength, for safety? To something in ourselves; or, as David against Goliah, in the name of the Lord of hosts, in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ?

3. Troubles befalling. Sufficient for each day is the evil of it; one event or other happens that crosses and grieves us. Now have we no refuge, nothing to betake ourselves to, that may help to bear us up?

One says, I have a father and mother to look after me. Another—I have a friend that will not see me want. But, says the believer, I have a refuge beyond them all, and that is Christ.

4. Dangers threatening. Besides what present evils we meet with, there are others that we have prospect of, afar off. And many times, the very fear of them is more grievous than they themselves are when they come. Now against these, also, Christ Jesus is, and ought to be, a Christian's refuge, Ps. lvi. 3; cxii. 7. O be convinced of this, that upon all these accounts you have need of a refuge. Till this is done all I shall say will be to no purpose. "What will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?" Isa. x. 3. These are good questions.

III. What kind of refuge is Jesus Christ?

He is a refuge that hath these properties; and they are all desirable in a refuge:

1. He is an appointed refuge; ordained of God on purpose for us to fly to, in all our ailments. There were many cities in Israel, many in every tribe, but only six appointed for refuge; and God himself appointed them, not Moses, John iii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 30. We may plead it with him in reference to all his offices, whereinsoever we have need of him, that he is therefore raised up, and sent, and anointed, and sealed, as Priest to satisfy for us, as Prophet to teach us, as King to protect and defend us.

2. He is an able refuge—all-sufficient. Many refuges that people fly to, under guilt, under trouble, prove unable to shield and shelter them. Many persons are either feeble and infirm, and cannot, or false and treacherous, and will not. Many things, as strong holds and castles, in time of war are untenable, broken reeds: so Rabshakeh calls Egypt, Isa. xxxvi. 6. and so it proved to God's people, when they trusted to it and relied upon it. "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb; yet could not he heal you, nor cure you of your wound," Hos. v. 13. Of our Lord Jesus this is said, which is certainly true, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty," Ps. lxxxix. 19. "He is able to save to the uttermost," Heb. vii. 25. "In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. ii. 18. Lord, if thou wilt *thou canst*, says the poor leper, Matt. viii. 2. He *can* acquit from guilt, he *can* secure from danger, he *can* support, and he *can* supply.

3. He is a refuge at hand. If a friend be never so able to help, if he be far off when we have need of him, what the better are we? "The word is nigh thee," Rom. x. 8. "God is a very present help in trouble," Ps. xlvi. 1. "The Lord of hosts is with us," Ps. xlvi. 7, 11.—*present with* us. It is a very comfortable consideration when under guilt—wounded, to know that the remedy is at hand; when tempted—under prevailing fears of want—in trouble, in danger, to be assured that cities of refuge are so near.

4. He is a universal refuge: *for all persons*. Whosoever will may come, and find shelter with him, Isa. lv. 1. *every one*, Rev. xxii. 17. *whosoever will*, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor. God hath no where excluded thee; then do not thou exclude thyself. Cities of refuge were for strangers, not Israel only.

He is a refuge *in all cases*, inward or outward, bodily or ghostly.—Let the offence be what it will, he hath merit for the pardon of it. Let the temptation be what it may, he hath strength to overcome it. Let the danger be ever so threatening, he can save from it. There was a limitation in the cities of refuge; they were only for the manslayer; the thief, the highwayman, the adulterer had no city; but in Christ there is a refuge for the most guilty. "I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy," 1 Tim. i. 13. "And such," referring to the awful list before enumerated, "were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," 1 Cor. vi. 11.

5. He is an unchangeable refuge, Heb. xiii. 8. The six cities of refuge in the land of Canaan are passed away, and gone, and are refuges no more: so is also many a strong fort and tower; but our refuge is still what he was, and where he was, Heb. vii. 24. Ps. xxvii. 10; cxlvi. 3, 5, 10.

6. He is an open refuge. If a refuge be never so near us, if it be shut against us, what the better are we? If the castle bridge be drawn up, what can it avail us? Our Lord Jesus is an open Saviour. Zech. xiii. a *fountain open*—not sealed and shut up. His eye is always open to see and behold us; his ear, to hear our prayers; his arms, to receive and embrace us; his hand, to give, to supply us; his doors, to bid us welcome. O that we were as open to him as he is to us, Ps. xxiv. He calls and calls again, Cant. v. 1.

7. He is the only refuge. Besides him there is no other;—none in heaven, none on earth; none within us, none without us, Isa. xl. 6—8.

None for *justification*. When we have sinned what other way is there of making atonement? Can saints and angels do it? Can our own righteousness? Then Paul would never have renounced his, as he did, though far beyond ours: his anxiety was to be found in him, Phil. iii. 8, 9. as the malefactor in the city of refuge.

None for *strength*; either to do duty or to resist temptation. Paul says, he could do all through Christ strengthening him, but nothing in and of himself. We are more than conquerors only in him. Rom. viii.

None in all our *outward concerns*, public or personal, Ps. lxii. 5—8; cxlvi. 3—5.

IV. What is it to fly to him for refuge, and what should move us so to do? If Christ be such a refuge, and the only such, then what is the reason so few come to him for refuge?

1. The reason is, they do not know him; their minds are blinded; they will not believe the report of the gospel concerning him, John iv. 10. *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that said unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.*

2. They are deluded with false refuges: they have other things to trust to; one to this, another to that, Ps. xx. 7. Prov. xviii. 11. Isa. xxviii. 15. When God shall send them hereafter to the refuges they have chosen, O the shame and confusion that will then follow! as Judg. x. 14. "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation." The righteous when they see it shall laugh, Ps. lii. 6, 7.

3. They do not feel their need of a refuge, Prov. iii. 17.

If others however will not, let *us* make him *our* refuge and fly to him accordingly.

1. *What is it to fly to Christ for refuge?*

(1.) It is to *betake ourselves to him.* Behold he calls, *Come unto me;* let thy soul answer, *Lo I come.* Come for pardon of all thy sins; come for righteousness wherein to appear before God; come for mercy, grace, peace, strength, comfort, quickening; yea, come with boldness, Heb. iv. 16.

(2.) It is to *lay hold* on him, so the word is here, by a true and a lively faith.

As a man sinking lays hold on a bough, cord, plank, cast out to save him.

As Joab laid hold on the horns of the altar, when Solomon sent to slay him, 1 Kings ii. 28.

As we lay hold on the opportunity of a good bargain, when it is offered to us; closing with it, accepting of it, deliberately, sincerely, freely, and for ever. This is believing: and you that have thus taken hold keep your hold; let not Satan, nor unbelief, beat thee off; say, Either at this door I must have salvation, or perish for ever. Necessity oftentimes makes them strong that are otherwise weak. When life lies upon it, and I must either hold fast or die, strength is summoned.

(3.) It is to do it *with all speed.* Flying is the swiftest motion of all other: such should ours be to Christ,— I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments, Ps. cxix. 60.—for three reasons;

The imminency of our danger. The avenger of blood is at thy heels; if he overtake thee short of Christ, thou art undone for ever.

The uncertainty of our life. We are here to-day, and gone to-morrow: no time is ours but the present time, 1 Cor. vi. 2.

The uncertainty of the offer of this refuge. Many a man's day of life is longer than his day of grace, Luke xix. 42. O then bestir thyself; hoist up sail while the wind blows; strike while the iron is hot. Do ye think the malefactor pursued would stay to talk and prate with every idle companion? No: but run with all his might for fear of the worst. So should we: his flight was but to save a temporal life, ours eternal.

2. *What encouragement have we thus to fly to Christ for refuge.*

(1.) His express call and command, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden," Matt. xi. 28. Heavy laden,—either with outward burthens, want, sickness, unkindness of relations, or malice of enemies. However it be, make thy case known to him, spread it before him, by prayer and supplication. Cast thy care upon him; believe it is that which he knows to be best for thee. He can and will make a way for thee to escape. But then thou must keep his way, not turn aside. Or, heavy laden—with inward pressures of guilt, sense of wrath, prevailing fears. Come to me, says he, as to thy refuge; I will relieve thee and succour thee, Isa. l. 10.

(2.) The experience of the saints of God in all ages, who have found him a ready refuge to them in all their troubles, Ps. xxxiv. 4—6. There is no instance to the contrary. No guilty sinner, that repented and believed the gospel, and laid hold by faith on the Lord Jesus, for peace and pardon, ever went without it.—And should not this encourage us?

Under the law we are told there were officers yearly chosen on purpose to oversee the highways to the cities of refuge, to be sure that they were in good repair, that there was no hinderance, no stumbling-stone, Deut. xix. 3. Besides, they were all Levites' cities. The same is the work of ministers of the gospel now. The command to them is, Isa. xl. 3, *Prepare ye the way.* And woe unto us if it be not done, and a thousand woes to them, that instead of removing stumbling stones out of the way, lay them in the way, instead of encouraging, discourage.

To conclude. My exhortation this day is,

1. To all that have not made Christ their refuge, by all means to do it, and that quickly, for delays are dangerous.

2. To those that have; to be doing it, yet daily more and more. And when they have done it, in God's name to take the comfort of it. Your consolation should be *strong* consolation, that have fled for refuge; that is, too strong for all your doubts and fears—prevailing against them and over them. No life is so sweet as theirs that make Christ their refuge at all times, in all things. But then be sure ye are never caught out of him. The malefactors if ever taken out of the refuge were slain. "We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end," Heb. iii. 14.

## SERMON VIII.

### CHRIST IS OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

JER. xxiii. 6.

*And this is the name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.*

THAT these words are to be understood of the Messiah, or Saviour, no one doubts that knows the Scripture, Jew or Gentile; but that Jesus of Nazareth is he, the Jew denies, the Christian only believes. He hath many names given him in Scripture; two, in the words foregoing, *v.* 5. a *righteous Branch; a King, reigning, and prospering;* Isa. vii. 14. *Immanuel;* ix. 6, 7. *Wonderful, Counsellor:* Matt. i. 21. *Jesus.* But among all the rest of his names, none is more sweet than this in the text, the *Lord our Righteousness. The Lord* Jehovah; the incommunicable name of God, never given to any creature, in heaven or earth. By this we prove him to be the infinite and eternal God. What can be plainer? He is *Jehovah*, having his being of himself, and giving breath and being to all things, for "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made," John i. 3. He is *our righteousness:* what that means you will hear, but this is his name by which he will be known, and this is his memorial unto all generations; by this name he hath been, is, and shall be, called by all true believers.

DOCT. Jesus Christ is the Lord our righteousness; and it is our duty to call him so.

Of all the sermons that ever I have preached to you concerning Christ, I would most earnestly beg your attention to this sermon. Of all that we are to teach, and you are to learn, concerning him, I beseech you learn this, be not ignorant of this.

Show, I. What it means.

II. Prove it duty to call him so.

I. Show what is meant by his being our righteousness. It means,

1. That it is in him alone that God the Father is well pleased. And is that so? Yes: it was declared twice by a voice from heaven, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. Not only *with* whom, but *in* whom, I am well pleased, atoned, pacified, satisfied. I acquiesce in him, without looking any further. Let me have him, and I have enough, I have all. He is God's all in all, and why then should he not be ours. If *he* be well pleased in him, why are not we?

2. That it is by and through him alone that we are justified; that is, acquitted from guilt, and accepted into favour, which are the ingredients of justification.

Acquitted from guilt. Guilty we all are; we know it, we can none of us deny it. Having sinned, we are for our sins justly liable to God's wrath and curse, both in this world and that which is to come. To be so is to be wretched and miserable; now how shall we do to be acquitted? Why, through Jesus Christ only: He is the way, and there is no other. Acts xiii. 38, 39. Were we thoroughly convinced of guilt, we should hearken to this; it would be thought a word worthy of all acceptation; and so it is. 1 Tim. i. 15.

Accepted into favour, Eph. i. 6. Rom. v. 1, 2. The grace and favour of God is the creature's happiness;—want that, and want all; have that, and have all. Now there can be no hope of this favour but in and by Jesus Christ. The holy God will admit of none into his friendship or fellowship, but those to whom Jesus Christ is made righteousness.

3. Tis through his merit and mediation alone that our performances are made acceptable, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As our bad deeds are no otherwise to be expiated, so our good deeds are no otherwise to be accepted. To what purpose is it for any of us to do any thing that is good, if we be not accepted in it; to pray, hear, give alms, keep the sabbath? Now it is Christ's righteousness alone that merits that acceptation; he is the incense that perfumes all.

4. It is by him alone that we have right and title to the heavenly inheritance. It is his purchase; he bought it with his blood. We had a right by creation upon condition of perfect obedience, but we lost it by our fall in Adam: it is restored only by the second Adam. If he be the Lord our righteousness, we may plead that, and say, Lord, Christ is mine, save me. save me from hell, for I am in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1. bring me to heaven, for I am in Christ; he is the way, the door.

But it may be asked, How will it be made out from Scripture, that this is the meaning of his being *our righteousness?* I answer: Both the Old Testament and the New are one in it; as face answers to face in a glass, or in the water, as the cherubims looked towards each other, so the Bible agrees on this subject.

In the *Old Testament* it is prophesied of him, Dan. ix. 24. *that he should bring in everlasting righteousness.* What to do? To *finish the transgression and to make reconciliation for iniquity.* Wouldst thou have an end made of thy sins? It must be in this way; it can be in no other. In Mal. iv. 2. He is called *the Sun of righteousness*, not only righteous in himself, pure and spotless, but the Lord *our* righteousness.

As full of righteousness for our purpose, in every thing, as the sun is of light; no danger of wanting.

As free to communicate as the sun is; whosoever will may come.

As refreshing and comfortable where he doth communicate it, as the sun is.

In the *New Testament* it is further cleared, so that he that runs may read.

*le unto us of God, righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30. that
od the Father pitying our lost and undone condi-
, for want of a righteousness, made him righteous-
s to us. Here is my Son, saith he, shall be your
teousness, I make him so to you; ordain, con-
ute, and appoint him your atonement, propiti-
n, advocate, surety. Plead him accordingly.
gain, *He hath made him to be sin for us who knew
in; that we might be made the righteousness of
l in him*, 1 Cor. v. 21. Note. It is said, he was
le sin for us; that is, the sin of the world was
uted to him, made to meet upon him as the debts
a great many debtors are upon one common
ety, Isa. liii. 6. Being found under such a debt
was treated accordingly, Isa. liii. 10. bruised—
*le an offering*, that is, by dying upon the cross—
same with his being made *a curse* for us, Gal.
13. (Lord! that such things should be spoken of
, done unto him, for the sake of poor worms!)
w this suffering and dying of his is imputed to
as our righteousness; as when the surety pays a
t, his payment is imputed to the debtor, as if he
self had paid it. Not his being born, living, ful-
ng the law, but his *death*. Not the sufferings of
life, but his dying sorrows.

Note also, Hereupon we are made *the righteous-
s* of God in him. We are accepted, justified, ac-
tted. But why the righteousness of God?

1.) Because this imputed righteousness is a right-
sness of God's own contriving and providing for
Phil. iii. 9. *which is of God by faith*; not the
hteousness of works, which is of ourselves; but
God by faith. We are sinners by imputation; we
y be righteous the same way.

2.) Because Christ is God, who wrought it out
d brought it in for us. It is not a man's righte-
sness, poor and weak, and insufficient, but a God's
hteousness. He is *Jehovah* our righteousness.

II. I am to persuade you all, to call Jesus Christ
this sweet name, the Lord *our* righteousness;
ch one with application to himself—as David.
ld would you think an Old-Testament saint, that
ed under that dark dispensation, should have
ch clearness in this matter? A shame to us that
e not clear in it, that live under gospel light. Ps.
1. *O God of my righteousness*—the God on whom
one I do rely for righteousness. The prophet
aiah speaks of it as the Shibboleth of all the saints,
a. xlv. 24, 25. It was Paul's choice in particular,
s deliberate choice, and should be ours, each of us,
hil. iii. 8, 9. O that I knew what to say, that would
evail. Some one perhaps objects, and says—"Call
m by this name? It is the easiest thing of a thou-
nd." You should distinguish doing it in word and
ngue, and doing it in deed and truth—understand-
gly, uprightly, absolutely, so as to renounce all
hers, and to cleave to him alone.

Consider, 1. The misery they are in who never yet called Jesus Christ by this name, and the blessed and happy condition they are in that have done so. Let me set the one of these over against the other, and if you will mix faith with it, I should hope it might move you.

(1.) Till we have called Jesus Christ the Lord our righteousness, that is, heartily owned him as such, our condition is a shameful, *naked* condition, and that is a wretched, miserable condition, Rev. iii. 17. because, till clothed with Christ's righteousness, our shame appears in the sight of God. Our shame is our sin. All thy sins are before him, and he loathes the sight of them. Perhaps thou sayest, What matter? O do not say so, for it is a matter, a sad matter.—When Adam saw his nakedness, he ran and hid himself; so wouldst thou, didst thou see thine. Well but, on the contrary, if thou hast heartily owned Christ, thy soul is a clothed soul; clothed with white raiment; clean and white, lovely and amiable; thou mayst go with comfort into the presence of God, as Jacob in Esau's clothes. Again,

(2.) Till we have called Jesus Christ the Lord our righteousness, ours is a dismal, dark condition. When we call the Lord our righteousness, then he rises upon our souls as a Sun of righteousness, and that which follows is the light of comfort, and peace, and joy; such joy as none knows but they that feel it. It is hidden manna, Ps. lxxxv. 10. Righteousness and peace meet together, in this sense, Rom. v. 1, 2. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand: and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Rom. v. 12. "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall *glory*," Isa. xlv. 25.—But till then there is small cause for glorying; all thy own righteousness is but a spark of thy own kindling, notwithstanding which, thou liest down in sorrow. Is it possible for thee to think of past sins and a future judgment, and the joints of thy knees not tremble, as Belshazzar's did? But,

(3.) Till we have called Jesus Christ the Lord our righteousness we are in a perilous, perishing condition. Christ's righteousness is to us as Noah's ark. How happy were Noah and all his that were in it, they all escaped. How miserable all the rest, though many: some climbing higher than others, nay, some that helped to frame the ark, yet they perished.

Consider, 2. The difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of being pardoned and justified, accepted and saved, in any other way, and the facility and easiness of obtaining it in this way. Set these also the one against the other.

(1.) It is impossible we should be accepted of God without a righteousness, one or other, because he is a righteous God; that is, he is of pure eyes, and, therefore, cannot endure to look upon iniquity, Ps.

v. 4; xi. 7. He is also just and true to his word, his threatening word. Now by that the curse is entailed upon every transgression, death is the wages of every sin; therefore, death and the curse must be undergone, or no pardon. The very natural conscience owns this. Whence else are all the qualms of fear and horror, which the wicked lie under? Besides,

(2.) It is impossible that either our own righteousness, or the righteousness of any of our fellow-creatures, one or other, in heaven or earth, should bear us out and bring us off before God. I say it is impossible, absolutely impossible—

*That our own should.* For it is not to be called a righteousness. We have no such thing, Rom. iii. 9, 10. Righteousness is complete conformity to the righteous will and law of God. Where is that to be found? Nowhere on earth, Isa. lxiv. 6. See Mic. vi. 6, &c.

It may be objected—Yea, but with the help of a little mercy it may do. I answer, Show me that scripture where pardon, and peace, and salvation, are promised to a mixture of a little of our righteousness and a little of God's mercy. It is impossible—

*That any other creature's should.* I mean, saint or angel, or what they call the church's treasure, made up of works of supererogation, done by men eminent for piety, in things good but not commanded, whereof the pope hath the key. (And who had the key lately, when for several months there was no pope.*) It is a mere fiction; Isa. lxiii. 16. Ps. xlix. 7. But,

On the other hand—How easy is it to obtain peace, and pardon, and salvation, by the merit and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, by calling him by this name. Easy, did I say? mistake me not. I do not mean easy in itself, or easy to the power of nature. No, it is harder to believe in Christ for righteousness than to keep all the commandments, because keeping the commandments hath something in the heart of man agreeing with it, but so hath not the way of justification by faith, it being purely by revelation.—I mean easy to grace, easy where God is pleased to give a willing mind, as knowledge is easy to him that understandeth, Prov. xiv. 6. Matt. xi. 28—30. 1 John v. 3.—Easy; that is, it is a ready way to justification and salvation, whereas seeking it by our own righteousness is a round-about way. We can never while we live know in any other way that one sin is pardoned, because perseverance to the end is required.

It may be asked—" If this be the only way, and such an easy, ready way, then what is the reason there are so few that walk in it; nay, what is the reason it is so scoffed and ridiculed as it is: —It is called putative righteousness?" I answer, The apostle, who was best studied in this point of any other teacher that ever was, speaking of the Jews, who of all other people did most stumble at this stumbling-stone, gives two causes of their so doing: Their ignorance and their pride, Rom. x. 3. " They being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." The same are still the causes. *Ignorance of God's righteousness.* Their minds are not enlightened to see that this is the way that God hath appointed, and that it is a sweet way, and a safe way. *Lothness to let go their own righteousness.* They would fain merit heaven for themselves. They scorn to accept of it as a gift, or to sue for it as poor persons. Some who would be persuaded to leave their sins, would not be persuaded to quit their doing so from being their righteousness, but it will not be, Isa. xlvi. 12. He that will put on the Lord Jesus Christ for justification, must put off himself, and all his own merit and righteousness, saying, None but Christ, none but Christ. And if he alone were not sufficient it were another matter. Is he not Jehovah our righteousness? Hath not the Father said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased? O then be persuaded; and you that have called him by this name, call him so still. There are four special times and seasons when this should be done:

1. When we have done amiss, and are under guilt, and wrath threatens. And when is it not that it is so? Every day. If you are not concerned, so much the worse. If made sensible, we shall cry out, O for a righteousness! Behold, here is one, Jesus Christ the righteous, " is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," 1 John ii. 1, 2.

2. When we have well done, after some good work, and pride of heart rises, and we begin to expect from God as if we were something. No, Jesus Christ is the Lord my righteousness. I am an unprofitable servant when I have done all.

3. When we ask any thing of God, " Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you," John xiv. 23.

4. When we come to look death and judgment in the face, which will be shortly; when sick and dying. O then for Christ, and his righteousness—it will be the cordial of cordials, 1 John i.

But observe this *caution*—Christ is not so our righteousness, as that we ourselves must not be righteous, and do righteously. We must be righteous, as if we were to be saved by it, and deny it, as having done nothing.

* Pope Alexander VIII. died, Feb. 1, 1691. His successor, Cardinal Pignatelli, was not elected till July 2d. Rapin, vol. xvii. p. 209, 210.

## SERMON IX.

### CHRIST IS OUR LIGHT.

JOHN xii. 46.

*come a light into the world, that whosoever believ-*
*on me should (or might) not abide in darkness.*

not here only, but elsewhere, in divers places
:ripture, that our Lord Jesus is held forth under
otion of a light.

It is said, God is light, 1 John i. 5. No crea-
hath the like resemblance to the divine nature,
ght hath. He doth not only *dwell in light*, but
*light*. Light is a pure, bright, clear, spiritual,
ixed substance. God is infinitely so. Now
s Christ, as God, is light. God of gods, light of
s, very God of very God.

But the text speaks of him as *coming into the*
*d*, as God incarnate, God manifest in the flesh;
as such, it saith of him, nay, he saith it of him-

*I am come a light*; and why? to what end?
*t whosoever believeth in me should (or might) not*
*e in darkness.*

ere are two DOCTRINES:

he one—That Jesus Christ is come a light into the
ld. The other—That now Jesus Christ is come a
t into the world, those that believe in him do
abide in darkness. Or rather thus,

esus Christ is *come* a light into the world; that
;ood news. It is one of his Old-Testament names,
*that cometh*, Ps. cxviii. 26. compare Matt. xi. 3.
s a truth now, that he is come; he that was to
ıe is come.

. Jesus Christ is come *a light* into the world; a
*ndation* and *food*; a *root* and *raiment*; our *head*
l *hope*; *refuge* and *righteousness*; and not only so,
*a light*. This adds to the goodness of the news,
l makes it better. What comfort could we take
ıny thing we have without light?

:. Now Jesus Christ is come a light into the world,
se *that believe in him abide not in darkness.*

This is the best news of all, that the light doth not
ne upon them in vain. They have eyes to see it,
y have the comfort of it.

Show, I. What kind of light Jesus Christ is.

II. What inferences we are to draw, from his being
ne a light, such a light, into the world.

I. What kind of light is the Lord Jesus?

There are several kinds of light. There is glow-
rm light, and rotten-wood light; fire light and
ndle light; star light and moon light: all these
: lights. But there is one light more, that is far
yond them all, and that is *sun* light; between
ıich, and the former, there is no comparison: and
at light Jesus Christ is—sun light. None of the
rmer is *the light of the world*; only the sun is so.
Now Jesus Christ is *the light of the world*, John viii. 13. Not only come *a* light into the world, but he is *the* light of the world.

It was prophesied of him, before he came, that he should arise a sun, Mal. iv. 2. Ps. lxxxiv. 11.

It is expressly told of him, that he did arise accordingly as such when he did come, "The day-spring from on high hath visited us," Luke i. 78.—the sun-rising. John the Baptist was the morning star that came before him. Now sun light hath these properties:

1. It is *glorious* light. The most glorious in itself. The glory of it is such as the eye cannot behold, or look upon, without winking, or twinkling, 1 Cor. xv. 41. The beauty of glorified bodies is set forth by it for want of a better illustration, Matt. xiii. 43. So is represented Christ, in his transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 2. And is not Jesus Christ of all others the most glorious. His name is Michael. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord*, Ps. xlv. 2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men*, Cant. v. 10. He is *the standard-bearer*, Col. i. 18. His *is the pre-eminence*. If you ask, In what? I answer, In every thing that is excellent. In all manner of perfections, wisdom, power, holiness, he is far exalted above all that is named both in heaven and earth. Every knee must bow to him, and every creature yield. Candles are not seen, no, nor stars, nor moon itself, when the sun shines; their light disappears: so are all other things eclipsed by the Saviour. O then let this advance your esteem of him more and more. You may think too highly of others, but not of him; either he will be uppermost, or nothing.

2. It is *general* light. It shines every where, Ps. xix. 6. One sun serves all the world, nay, we are told, that all places have equally the same measure and proportion of the sun's presence with them every year, though not after the same manner. All have as much day as night, and as much night as day, which is certainly a contrivance of Infinite Wisdom, and it is to be adored in it. There is but one Christ, but that one is a universal Saviour to all the world; so that all that are saved are saved by him alone, and by no other, 1 John ii. 2. When he sent forth his apostles to preach the gospel, see their commission, how large! "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark xvi. 15. What the Psalmist says of the sun and its course, Paul applies to their preaching, Rom. x. 18. I cannot say, all the world hath alike the benefit of the gospel at this day; would to God it had. But to be sure we have it, and have long had it, Matt. iv. 16. For which we have cause to be very thankful. "While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light," John xii. 36.

3. It is a fountain-light. What light the moon and the stars have, they derive it all from the sun. They have none of their own further than he com-

municates. So Jesus Christ is the spring-head and fountain from whence every good and perfect gift comes. *Gifts of nature* do all flow from him. "That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," John i. 2. So some understand that of the *light of reason*, which all men have: it is a ray from this sun—all learning, knowledge in arts and sciences, trades and manufactures. So also *gifts of grace:* "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace," John i. 16. He is the *author* as well as finisher of faith, Heb. xii. 2. And, therefore, in all our wants we must have recourse to him; and in all our receivings we must give him the praise.

4. It is a free light. It costs us nothing. What is more free than the light; so what is more free than free grace, John iv. 10. the gift of God, Rom. v. 15. the free gift. So Christ is called, and justification by him. In this strain the promises, and calls, and invitations run, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness," Isa. lv. 1, 2. Rev. xxii. 17. Therefore ye are inexcusable if ye go without.

5. It is enlightening light. The sun hath not its light for itself, but for the world, and it communicates it accordingly. It rises every morning, and dispels the darkness of the night, and shines all the day; and very sweet and useful it is. Our sun Christ is an enlightening sun, Luke ii. 32. He finds us not only in the dark, but blind, Rev. iii. 17. even darkness itself. But he doth not leave us so. He opens blind eyes. That is more than the sun in the firmament doth or can do. Bring your eyes, and he will bring light; but eyes he gives not. But this sun gives eyes, Isa. xlii. 6, 7. He doth not only reveal the object, but repairs the faculty; he is a *healing* sun, Mal. iv. 2. In Rev. iii. 18. we read of *eye-salve*, and in 1 John ii. 20. of the *unction*. O pray for this, as Paul doth for the Ephesians, Eph. i. 17, 18. Pray, as the blind man that came to Christ, for eye-sight.

6. It is increasing light. In the morning, when the sun first rises, there are mists, and fogs, and clouds, which darken the air. But, by degrees, as the sun gets up, they vanish, and are gone, and anon noon-day comes. So it is with the souls that Christ enlightens, Prov. iv. 18. See Isa. xxx. 26. Our knowledge in the things of God is never perfect and complete while we live in this world, 1 Cor. xiii. 14. hereafter it will be: allude to Mark viii. 22.

(1.) We should therefore be humble in ourselves, not only because what we have we have received, but because if we receive but little, it is little in comparison with what we shall have. Pride understanding is a root sin.

(2.) We should be patient towards others, judging, and censuring, and despising them, cause they see not what we do. We should rat encourage and comfort them. Their light als growing, Phil. iii. 15.

II. What inferences are to be drawn from t subject.

1. What a miserable condition then is a sin Christless condition! If Christ be the light, th those who are out of Christ are out of the ligh the Sun of righteousness be not risen upon thy so thou art benighted to this day. It may be ris amongst us, and yet not be risen upon us. It m shine in the places where we live, and yet not sh into our hearts, 2 Cor. iv. 6. Who can choose b pity Egypt, where it was dark for three days; mu more the northern parts, where it is dark for s months: most of all the poor souls that have be in darkness all their days; those who see nothi know nothing, and, which is worst of all, care know nothing, in the things of God and of th souls: nay, who hate the light, shut their ey against it, and love darkness rather than ligh John iii. 19, 20. How will such escape, that rea against the light, Job xxiv. 13. saying, Depart, I xxi. 14. as the Moors, that curse the rising sun? godly man doth so. Where the least glimmerings saving light hath shined into the soul, it begets desire after more and more of it; a love to the mea especially the word of God.

But wherein lies the misery of a blind and da condition.

(1.) I answer, It is very *uncomfortable*. Eccl. x 7. Light is sweet and pleasant, so is knowledge i the things of God. Ask those that have it, they wi tell you that they would not be without it for a world Prov. ii. 10. This pleasure thou hast none of. Ser mons are like the white of an egg to thee, without savour, without relish.

(2.) It is very *unsafe*. Thou hast a journey to go that will not be gone without light. There are many by-ways; it is easy to miss the right way: they find it so that are most enlightened, much more those that have no light. There are many gins, and snares, and pit-falls, there is great danger of being caught; John xii. 35. "He that walks in darkness knows not whither he goeth." He thinks he is going to heaven, and alas! he is going to hell.

(3.) Thou hast work to do that will not be done without light, nay, not without sun light. Some ordinary works may be done by candle light, but not this. Thou hast a God to serve, a soul to save; which is needful work, Luke x. 42. and nice work, not to be done by the light of nature or the power of nature.

(4.) It is miserable *here*. Such are under the

s power at present, (who in this sense is the ruler e darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12.) and in ighway to the regions of eternal darkness, to companion with him for ever. Darkness and a go together, Isa. xlii. 7. Acts xxvi. 18.

) It will be miserable *hereafter*. All this is o affect you with the misery of such a condition, et all is nothing till you are brought to make pplication to yourselves: Is not this my condi- —Rather are you not ready to say, with the pha-i, John ix. 40. *Are we blind also?* Sure I am, we each of us born blind.—Are we convinced of —Hath the light enlightened us so far?—If it the next query will be, when and how wast enlightened; thine eyes opened, the change ght? If you do not know when or how, canst witness the thing itself, and say, as he, "One I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see," ix. 25. It cannot be, but that one born blind and wards seeing, must be sensible of a great alter- ; though but little at first, yet more and more wards.

What an unspeakable mercy then was the ıg of Christ to save us from all this misery; to light to lighten the world. We have cause to God every day, for the light of the sun.—What ıngeon were the world without it! the moon all the stars, as many as they are, cannot do that one sun doth. So saints and angels, and all creatures put together, are nothing without st. Therefore thank God, above all, for the un- kable gift; especially if he be risen upon thy , if he have begun to make thee light in the l, Eph. v. 8. This is certainly the mercy of ies; all is nothing without it. Though he have sed thee with temporal blessings of all sorts,— th, strength, wife, children, a plentiful estate; all this were nothing, if he had not called thee of darkness into his marvellous light, Col. i. 13.

Of what concernment is it to us to come to ist, to be enlightened by him. Were you, any ou, (which blessed be God you are not,) destitute odily eye-sight, and I could tell you tidings of that could infallibly cure you, how welcome ıld I be. Behold! I bring you tidings of one can cure your spiritual blindness. But then you t come to him, believe in him, as here; that *oever believeth*, that is, mixes faith with the re- of the gospel, concerning him, his ability, and ingness to save; in the sight and sense of this dness and darkness, and the insufficiency of all r remedies, betakes himself to him, craves help im, casts himself upon him, trusts in him, doth e directs him, shall not abide in darkness.—As "Jesus said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of am. He went his way therefore, and washed, came seeing," John ix. 7. The direction was, *Go wash*;—so I address you. Now what harm is there in all this? Will it not be of unspeakable benefit and comfort to thy soul here, hereafter? Behold he counsels thee; "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see," Rev. iii. 18. Behold he calls thee, Mark. x. 49. O let the call this day be an effectual call. Delay no longer; away quickly to the throne of grace, and beg for this eye-salve;—to the means of grace, and seek it there.

4. What is to be done by those on whom this light is risen; I anwer,—As Christ is the light of the world, so ye also are the light of the world. He himself hath christened you with that name, "Ye are the light of the world, Matt. v. 14. not the greater light that rules the day, he only is that; but—the lesser lights. Then,

(1.) *Let your light shine before men*, v. 16. hide not your candles under a bushel. Walk as children of the light, Eph. v. 8. Rom. xiii. 12, 13. 1 Thess. v. 5—8.

(2.) Let your light be *growing and increasing* more and more—especially concerning the evil of sin, the weakness of self, the excellency of Christ, the beauty of holiness, the vanity of this world, the reality of the other world.

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## SERMON X.

### CHRIST IS OUR LIFE.

### Col. iii. 4.

*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

There are three lessons to be learned from these words:

1. That Christ is *our life*.
2. That Jesus Christ shall *appear*.
3. That when Christ shall appear all true believers shall *appear with him* in glory.

Our attention will be confined to one—Christ is our life. You see it is plainly and expressly laid down here; he that runs may read the truth of it. And is he *our life?* then how dear and precious should he be to us! Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life, yet how many are there that will give nothing for Christ, no not a lust for him; a bad sign, he is not yet their life, for if he were, they would not part with him for a world, for a thousand worlds.

Show, I. In what sense Jesus Christ is our life.

II. What inferences may be drawn from it.

I. In what sense is Jesus Christ our life?

Life is three-fold; there is natural life, spiritual life, and eternal life.

1. Natural life, which is the life of the body flowing from its union with the soul: while soul and body are together, we live; when they part, we die. Now who brought them together, who keeps them together? Jesus Christ: then he is our natural life, Deut. xxx. 20.

He is so as God blessed for ever; it is in him that we live, and move, and have our being; he breathed into us the breath of life at first, Gen. ii. 7. he holds our soul in life, Ps. lxvi. 9. In this sense he is our life, John i. 3, 4.

He is so also as God-man, the Mediator; we owe it to his intercession, that we are here alive this day: did not he interpose, we were gone. He is the dresser, Luke xiii. 7—9. *Cut them down*, saith justice, *Let them alone*, saith Jesus; and thence it is that we are let alone.

If a man be under a sentence of death, the friend that procures for him a reprieve, may well be said to be his life. Now that is our case,—and what pity is it, that so few consider it, that so few lay it to heart:—we live upon him, we cannot live without him, and yet we do not live to him.

2. Spiritual life, which is the life of the soul flowing from its union with God. When God and the soul come together, the soul lives; when they part, it dies; thy soul is but the carcass of a soul, if it have not union with God. Now there is no union with God but by Jesus Christ; it is he alone that brings God and souls together. He is the Mediator, the Peace-maker. First, the two natures, God's nature and man's nature, were united in him, as God-man; then he took up the quarrel between their persons, and made peace. God and man could never have come together but for Christ; he is the bond of the union; then he, and he only, is *the life*, John xiv. 6. *no coming to the Father*, that is, to union with the Father, *but by him*.

By our natural life we live to one another, to mutual comfort and converse; by our spiritual life we live to God, and have converse with him, and he with us; which cannot be, unless we be alive to him, for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living. Now how are we made *alive to God?* Only *through Jesus Christ*, Rom. vi. 11.

It is he that begins spiritual life in us, Eph. ii. 1. Our natural condition is a dead condition, not only a dark condition, a blind condition, till he enlighten us, but a dead condition, till he quicken us. Many a man is blind that is not dead; born blind, yet not born dead; but we are born both blind and dead. We are before him, as those dead and dry bones, Ezek. xxxvii. till he breathes upon us, by his word and Spirit; then we live, and not till then, Gal. iv. 19. He is said to be formed in us, that is, to become the soul of our souls; his Spirit dwelling in us, (which if *we have* not, Rom. viii. 9. *we are none of his,*) is the same thing to our souls, that our souls are to our bodies—the means, and way, and principle of their living. As his human nature was formed in the womb of the virgin by the Holy Ghost over-shadowing her; so his divine nature is formed in every believing soul, 2 Pet. i. 4. by the same Holy Ghost over-shadowing them.

It is he that carries it on and continues it. We see he hath breathed the life of grace into us, if he should then leave us to live of ourselves, alas! we should die again presently, and therefore, he loves to it, when he hath bestowed it, to maintain and cherish it, Heb. xii. 2. Ps. lxvi. 9. *Which holdeth our soul in life.* This is true of life spiritual. We say, Preservation is a continued creation, John v. 17. It is so with reference to grace; in him we live spiritually, and move spiritually, and have our being spiritually; live, and move, and have our being towards God. His flesh and blood is the food of our souls; except we eat of that, and drink of that by believing, our souls can no more subsist, than our bodies can without meat and drink.

He is the keeper of our spiritual life, 1 Pet. i. 5. Adam had the keeping of his own, and lost it, the devil cozened him of it; and so should we: therefore he himself undertakes it, and it is well for us he does. We are no good keepers of spiritual life, we cannot of ourselves keep life and soul together; it is he that doth it every day.

3. Eternal life, which is the life of heaven: this and spiritual life are for substance the same: they differ in degree only. Life spiritual, the life of grace, is life eternal, the life of glory, begun; and life eternal, the life of glory, is life spiritual, the life of grace, perfected.

They differ as the child's life and the man's life, 1 Cor. xiii. 11, 12.

As the morning-sun from the noon-sun, Prov. iv. 18.

As the spring from the summer; the budding rose from the blown rose.

Now of this life Jesus Christ is,

1. The procurer and purchaser; he bought it for us, Heb. v. 9. It was the will of the Father that he should come and bestow it on the remnant, John vi. 40, 47: x. 10. He *hath* it, *hath it* already, that is, the earnest of it, in his heart, the first-fruits of the great harvest; or, he is as sure of it as if he had it in his hand.

2. He is the life itself. Wherein consists the happiness of heaven?

In being *with* Jesus. This was it he promised the penitent thief, Luke xxiii. this was it that Paul desired, Phil. i. To be *with* him so, as to see him and enjoy him. It is sweet now to see him through the lattices, through a glass darkly, in his holy ordi-

nances, what will it be then to see him face to face, to see him not afar off, but near? Numb. xxiv. 17. not as another's, but as our own. Dives saw Abraham, and Lazarus in his bosom,—but what the better.

In being *like* him. There is now a kind of rude draught of his image drawn upon the soul, but hereafter that draught shall be perfected, we shall be completely like him: this follows upon the former, likeness—upon vision.

Now, in the rude draught, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Hereafter, in the perfection, 1 John iii. 1, 2. Like him in body, Phil. iii. 21. We shall *appear* with him—as here. Now, to speak properly, this is the life, and of this that saying of his is commonly interpreted, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," John xiv. 6. As if he had said, I am my people's everlasting happiness, as God to Abraham, Gen. xv. 1. thy *reward* hereafter, thy *shield* here. The life hereafter in the other world, and the true way to it in this world; and what would we have more?

II. What may we infer from hence?

1. If Christ be our life, then without Christ without life;—Christless souls are lifeless souls, 1 John v. 12. I beseech you attend to what I say, it is about matters of life and death, and those are matters of great concernment, especially life and death spiritual, life and death eternal.

If ye have not Christ ye are dead men and women, for he is the life.

You are dead in law, under a sentence of death; it is only to those that are in Christ Jesus that there is no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1.—to others then there is.

You are dead in state, void of spiritual life: *This my son was dead*, dead to his father; his father was all one as if he had no such son: so is thy case as to any duty or service. Now when did he begin to be otherwise? When became he alive?—When he *arose and came*. Hast thou done so? If not, thou art dead, dead to this day. If thou *hast* Christ thou didst receive him. But when? how? at what ordinance? by whose offer? Perhaps thou art not able to tell, when first; but I ask, when at all? Saints are often receiving him, but if never, how *have* him. We know when we received, that is, closed with, such a one as husband, wife, master, landlord, friend; and why not know when we received Christ as Prince and Saviour: for certain, they that received Christ have received the spirit of Christ, Gal. iv. 6. *contra* Rom. viii. 9. Now the Spirit is a Spirit of grace and supplication, sets the heart against sin, inclines to what is good; it is a law written in the heart. O try! Will ye believe a man is dead that hath neither breath, nor sense, nor motion; we reckon so, as to the body, and in like manner it is, as to the soul.

If there are no inward breathings towards God, no desires after him, no hearty praying, otherwise than in a cold, dead form rested in, the soul is dead. Crying is a sign of life.

If there are no spiritual senses exercised, seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling; no sense of burthen in sin, no taste of sweetness in the word of God, no sight of invisible things, no ear to hear the voice, either of word or rod; the soul is dead.

And so for motion; they that have received Christ Jesus the Lord, they walk in him: to them *to live* is Christ, as Phil. i. 21. They do all they do, that is good, in his name and strength, aiming to please him. Now, will ye bring your condition to this touchstone? What say ye? are you dead or alive? You are alive with bodily life, God be praised, but are you possessed of soul life? What life is there in the inward man?

2. Then the way to live is to make Christ ours; the only way, there is no other. You would all live, would you not? I live in the world,—what else? I mean, live to God now, and live with him hereafter. O then come to Christ, and close with him; he complains, we will not, John v. 40. And why will we not? Because we are not convinced, we do not understand, we do not believe; in a word, we will not, because we will not. Two things should move us;

The one is, The unspeakable misery of dead souls. See Eph. ii. 1, 2, 12. This now, and as for hereafter, they must be eternally dying.

The other is, The unspeakable happiness of living souls; *they shall appear with him*, who is their life: all must appear, but they in glory. You tell us we are dead, and yet you tell us we must come to Christ. Can dead men come?

I reply, Thou hast as much power as ever any had that lived before thee. What power had Lazarus when he came out of the grave at Christ's call? The power went along with the call—Lazarus, come forth—and Lazarus came forth. Again,

Thou canst pray to God to give thee the power, and when he hath given it, thou canst use and employ it; and who requires more? Eph. v. 14. Is it objected, But I am an old sinner, and have been long dead; is there hope for me? I answer, Lazarus had been long dead, yea, and buried, yet at Christ's word he lived. We read of two others raised by him—the ruler's daughter, newly dead; the widow's son, upon the bier;—signifying the several sorts of sinners spiritually dead,—some young; some middle-aged; some old. There is hope for each. Yet presume not, neither say, I will to-morrow, for to-morrow is none of ours: the uncertainty of the continuance of life natural, should make us hasten to secure life spiritual and life eternal.

3. Then you that are alive, remember how you came to be so. You were not the authors of your own life, you had it from Christ, therefore let him have the glory of it; call him by this name every day, Lord Jesus, thou art my life. We can destroy ourselves, but we cannot help ourselves, Hos. xiii. 9. Eph. ii. 8. This should humble us, and lay us low.

4. Then to him we must go for all our daily supplies, for the support and maintenance of our life; the same that began the good work must perform and finish it; how oft doth David, Ps. cxix. pray, *Quicken* me, O Lord, O Lord, *quicken* me. He was alive certainly, but being sensible of dulness, deadness, decays, he flies to God: so must we; we must excite, quicken, ourselves, and exhort, quicken, one another; yet after all, it is grace that quickens.

5. We should bless God, both for the life we have and the life we hope for. See Isa. xxxviii. 19. Ps. lvi. 12, 13. Had it been from death temporal only, we had cause for praise, but much more for freedom from spiritual death. Encourage faith by it; he that hath done the greater will do the lesser, *v.* 13. Encourage patience by it under outward troubles, Ps. cxviii. 18.—not to damnation: see Lam. iii. 49.—a *living* man.

6. Then rest not in having life, but press after liveliness, Rev. iii. 1, 2. A lively frame in our walking is an excellent frame, it rids work, brings something to pass in religion. See how lively and active wicked men are.

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## SERMON XI.

### CHRIST IS OUR PEACE.

### EPHESIANS ii. 14.

***For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.***

THIS *he* here spoken of is certainly our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *we that were sometimes afar off, are made nigh*, *v.* 13. That which is said of him is, that he is *our peace.*

DOCT. The Lord Jesus Christ is our peace.

I shall show in what sense, and how, we are to understand it, and what improvement we are to make of it.

Peace is three-fold: There is peace with God—peace within ourselves—and peace with one another.

And all these Jesus Christ is: our *peace*, not only a friend to it, but the thing itself; as our *righteousness*, our life, so our peace. He hath not only brought in a righteousness, an everlasting righteousness, but he himself is it. So he hath not only made peace, and proclaimed peace, but he *is* our peace. He not only gives us life, but *is* our life.

I. He is our peace with God.

When God made man at first there was perfect love and amity between them—God at peace with man; man at peace with God. They had sweet fellowship and converse one with another, walking together in the garden. But when Adam sinned, then, immediately, the quarrel began. Eating the forbidden fruit broke the peace, and ever since there hath been a quarrel.

A mutual quarrel. God an enemy to man; man an enemy to God, Zech. xi. 8.

A universal quarrel. It is true of all the children of Adam, without exception, one as well as another, Eph. ii. 3.—*children of wrath.*

Passively, God is wrath with us.

Actively, we are wrath with God. As all men are enemies, so all man is enmity, Rom. viii. 7. The understanding, the will, the mind, Col. i. 21. Besides,

This is a growing quarrel; it increases more and more by actual sin, Hos. iv. 1.—Omission—commission.

And on God's part it is a righteous quarrel: he hath reason to be angry, and to be offended with us.

This appears if we look upon sin as a debt; and such it is. We are taught to pray, Forgive us our *debts.* Sinner, let me tell thee, thou art indebted to the God of heaven. [And he to thee; he owes thee a payment, Deut. vii. 10.] It may be thou art beforehand in the world, but thou art behind-hand with God. Thou owest him for all the talents thou hast received, and not improved, Matth. xxv. 14, &c. "I will recover my wool and my flax," Hos. ii. 9. I will *recover;* it is a law-term: it is *my* wool, mine still, as to the propriety, though given to you for your use.

It appears also if we regard it as a trespass: *Forgive us our trespasses.* The divine law is given us, as a hedge, to keep us in compass. When we sin we leap the hedge; as in profaning the sabbath we rob God, encroach upon his time.

It appears further if we look upon sin as treason, high treason, against the crown and dignity of the God of heaven: an affront to his majesty. It defies, despises, denies him.—"And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go," Exod. v. 2. This is the language of every wilful sin. But,

It is the quarrel of a covenant, Lev. xxvi. 25.

Now, on man's part it is an unrighteous, unreasonable quarrel. He hath done nothing to deserve our enmity, Jer. ii. 4, 5. John x. 32. And

If it be not taken up, it is like to be an everlasting quarrel, like that with Amalek, Exod. xvii. 16. Other feuds death puts an end to, but here it is not so. Death brings the sinner into an endless state of misery and torment, where he is hating, and cursing, and blaspheming God, and God hating, and plaguing, and punishing him to all eternity. O that this were seriously thought of by us! that we would lay it to heart, making application each of us to ourselves—*I* am the man; God hath a quarrel with *me*; *I* am indebted; *I* have trespassed. Think thou hearest him saying to thee, as to Ephesus, Rev. ii. 4. "I have somewhat *against thee.*"

: is in reference to this quarrel that the Lord
as Christ is *our peace*. He interposes to take it
and he hath taken it up upon terms agreed on.
is the Mediator, 1 Tim. ii. 5. He is the Days-
, Job ix. 33. As he that steps between to make
ce between two that are at variance, must deal
a both parties, first with one, then with the other,
lid he.

. He deals with God—to atone and pacify him.
ust have satisfaction, saith divine Justice, for the
t that these creatures owe me, for the wrong that
y have done me, so many oaths, lies, curses, so
ay sabbaths profaned, prayer neglected. Lord,
at will satisfy? Blood? Heb. ix. 22. Death? Gen.
17. Rom. vi. 23. Will any blood, any death, do
Will the blood of bulls and goats make amends?
ll the death of rams and lambs satisfy? Nay,
l the death of my first-born? Mic. vi. 6, 7. No,
ust be the blood of *God*, that the merit of it may
of infinite value;—and that God must be man too,
t the nature that sinned may satisfy; the same
ure. Now, where is that God-man that will un-
take it? Lo, I come, says the blessed Jesus, ra-
r than this quarrel shall continue, and divine
tice be unatoned, and poor sinners everlastingly
ish, Ps. xl. 6. I will be made a man, a man of
rows, a poor man: I will suffer and die, die upon
rce. Why, that will do, says God, let me have
t, and I will be friends: and he had it, in the ful-
s of time; he had it, and declared himself satis-
l, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. Do we understand this,
ieve it, apply it? "All things are of God, who
h reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and
h given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to
, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world
to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto
m; and hath committed unto us the word of re-
nciliation," 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

2. Having done with God, he deals with man;
ery man, one by one; not himself immediately, in
own person, but by proxy. He sends his Spirit
treat with us; and may I not safely say, he hath
en one time or other treating with each of you,
eking to persuade you? What to do? Why, to
friends with God, to lay down your enmity against
n, and to be willing to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 20.
inisters are the Spirit's agents in this matter, and
ey come and beseech you, and when they beseech
u, God in them beseeches you. Now some are
evailed with, blessed be God: "You that were
metime alienated, and enemies in your mind by
cked works, yet now hath he reconciled," Col. i. 21.
nere is a certain *now* of reconciliation one time or
her in our lives, sooner or later; and they are they
at can say, he is our peace, he hath made both one,
ought God and us together, *broken down the par-
tion wall.*

Some may ask—What is that partition wall?

On God's side the guilt of sin is it; till that be satisfied for, he cannot be friends. This is broken down by Christ dying.

On our part the corrupt nature is it, the carnal, stubborn will. Till that be subdued, the heart of stone turned into a heart of flesh, we will never be friends, we cannot. Now that is broken down by renewing grace. The Spirit of God in the work of regeneration and sanctification makes the change, turns the world upside down in the man, opens his blind eyes, softens his hard heart; of a stranger, brings him acquainted; of an enemy, makes him a friend. Now this work of making peace, bringing God and man together, is,

*Necessary work.* Work that must be done, or we are undone; it is the one thing needful, and there is reason it should be done quickly, because of the uncertainty of time, and the greater uncertainty of opportunity, Luke xix. 41.

*It is work that no one else can do*, but he only that is our peace. The papists grant there is but one mediator of reconciliation, though there be many of intercession; but we know but one, both of intercession and reconciliation, and Jesus is he.

*It is work that he hath done for some*, I hope some of *you*. Are ye not friends, reconciled?

*It is work that he would do for all.* It is not because of him that any perish; he calls, invites, entreats, persuades, Rev. iii. 20. Matt. xxiii. 37. Isa. xlv. 22. O suffer yourselves to be prevailed with by him. Say, Lord, I yield, I will stand it out no longer. Many arguments may be used to move us to be friends with God, and to make Jesus Christ our peace. In order thereunto,

Consider, 1. That there is no standing out against him, no fighting it out with him; he will certainly be too hard for us.

His arm is a long arm; therefore he can reach us wherever we are. There is no hiding ourselves from him. Besides his sword, he hath a bow and arrows, Ps. vii. 12, 13.

His arm is a strong arm; mighty, almighty, as to save, so to destroy;—therefore the blow, when it falls wherever it lights, will be accordingly, 1 Cor. x. 22. Heb. x. 31. O that this were considered, "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together," Isa. xxvii. 4. By briers and thorns is meant, —the sinner himself, who is no more able to abide his wrath, than briers and thorns a fire; and—all those uninstituted ways and means which men have invented to themselves, towards making peace. All our own righteousness, penances, pilgrimages; they are all utterly insufficient for this purpose.

Consider, 2. He is willing, freely willing, to become friends, Isa. xxvii. 4. Fury is not in me, and, *v. 5. Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me.*

By *strength* is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, the arm of God, the power of God; so called, not only because by him he made the world—as *the word*—but because had it not been for his mediation he had been weak, as it were, could not, consistently with his honour and justice, have forgiven sin; but now it is otherwise.

By *laying hold* is meant believing. Faith in Christ is the soul's laying hold upon Christ, as Joab on the horns of the altar, as a sinking man on a cord cast out;—as when a blow is threatened on the arm, that holds the weapon, which prevents striking, so this laying hold prevents the stroke of justice. Now, shall we thus lay hold on the blessed Jesus, plead his undertaking? Say, Lord, be friends with me, for Christ hath died, and made peace.

Consider, 3. That until this be done, we are certainly miserable, for God is our enemy; either friend or foe, that is certain. If God be our enemy, all that is in God is our enemy; all the creatures are our enemies, waiting only for orders.

Consider, 4. If this be done, we are made for ever. This is Eliphaz' argument to Job, *ch.* xxii. 21. *Good shall come unto thee;* all good—temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Now there are certain *marks* by which to know whether Christ be our peace towards God.

1. Have we thus laid hold on him by believing, accepted of him, yielded ourselves to him with unfeigned consent and assent, renouncing all other? If so, thy peace is made, the partition-wall is broken down, thou mayst go with boldness to the throne of grace, and sue out thy pardon, and take the comfort of it, Rom. v. 1, 2.

2. What is sin to us? If Christ be *our peace*, sin is our trouble, lies heavy as a burthen; it is felt and bewailed every day.

If God be made our friend, through Christ *our peace*, sin is looked upon as an enemy, and hated, and pursued, and watched against accordingly. Time was when it had the entertainment of a friend, an inmate; the doors were open to it, it was heartily welcome; provision was made for it. Is it otherwise now? 2 Kings ix. 22.

3. If Christ be our peace, he hath not only reconciled God to us, but us also to God, and to all that is his; his name, his glory, his word, his day, his people;—for their relation' sake to him—because they bear his image.

4. If Christ be our peace, and have made peace, there is always care to keep the peace. If any new matter of controversy arise, as soon as the heart smites, which it will do quickly, and we are made sensible of it, there will be no rest in the spirit, till the divine favour be recovered again. Guilt in the soul is like a mote in the eye, not at ease till wept out. It uses to be so among friends.—Now, try by these marks. Many think all is well when it is not so; other doubt when there is no cause; therefore, examine.

II. Christ is our peace with one another.

It were a desirable thing that all who fear God in the land, in the neighbourhood, were at peace among themselves; for as for peace with wicked men, it will never be while the world stands; the seed of the serpent, of the bond-woman, will hate, will persecute the seed of the woman—the free woman; fire and water will as soon be reconciled as these two seeds. But how happy were it if all good people were at peace, if all their enmities were at an end! The Saviour left this blessing as a legacy, John xiv. pressed it, John xv. prayed for it, John xvii.

The only mean of it is Jesus Christ. The scope of the text leads to understand it of the union made between Jew and Gentile, at mortal feuds before, but reconciled in Christ.—And how?

1. By his becoming a common Saviour to both. It was his object to "reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby," Eph. ii. 16.

2. By breaking down the wall of partition; that was, the ceremonial law, which he put an end to at his death, Eph. ii. 15.

3. By begetting in their hearts, by his Holy Spirit, a dear and entire love one towards another. As in his ministry he preached it, and pressed it, so by his grace he works it. This was a great matter when first accomplished. Now he that hath reconciled the enmity, and made peace, can certainly reconcile any other, for none was ever greater than it: those amongst ourselves are nothing to it. Let us apply ourselves to him then, and pray "for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee."

Pray—That the wall of partition may be broken down—within, without; unwarrantable, unscriptural impositions without; and uncharitable, unchristian dispositions within.

Pray—That by his Spirit and grace he would knit and join us together in brotherly love, which is the bond of perfectness. Something hath been done, and is in the doing, towards it; all other names laid aside—this one taken up—the united brethren. Formerly a book called the Protestant Reconciler was publicly burned; now the king* declares himself such.

III. Christ is our peace within ourselves, in our own bosom.

We commonly call this peace of conscience. It is an inward, sedate, composed, cheerful frame of spirit, at all times and in all conditions. Now, the blessed Jesus is this also; if the first, the third, for it is the result and product of it. When all is clear between us and heaven, how can it be but there must be joy in the Holy Ghost, or if not that, yet, however

* William III.

ace, quietness? The noise of trouble is without, icah v. 5. "This man shall be the peace."—His ing man laid the foundation, Heb. *this* man, viz. the ustrious person described in *v.* 4. He not only gives ace, as a legacy, but is the peace.—Therefore, if want peace, we must go to him. If we have it, us give him the praise. It is called rest, and to n we must come for it, Matt. xi. 28, 29.

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## SERMON XII.

### CHRIST IS OUR PASSOVER.

1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

*r even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: let us therefore keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

ERE are two things in these words:
The one a doctrinal position or assertion, containing it the marrow or sweetness of the whole gospel: *r even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*
The other a practical inference drawn from it, way of use and application: *Let us therefore keep e feast*, &c.
The former branches itself into three propositions:
1. Christ is our *passover.*
2. Christ our passover is *sacrificed.*
3. Christ our passover is sacrificed *for us.*
So also doth the latter:
1. Therefore we must *keep the feast.*
2. Therefore *not with old leaven, nor with the leaven malice.*
3. Therefore *with the unleavened bread of sincerity d truth.* Here were work for many sabbaths. I all be brief on each.
Under the first head, the DOCTRINE is,
I. Christ is our passover.
The passover was a yearly feast among the Jews, pointed of God in remembrance of the destroying gel passing over the houses of the Israelites when e first-born were slain in the houses of the Egyp- ns. Now Christ is not the feast, but forasmuch there was a command about a lamb, called the schal lamb, concerning which there were sundry es and ceremonies enjoined to be observed, sus Christ is that lamb, that paschal lamb, called a figure here, *the passover.* That lamb was a type Christ. He is our paschal lamb, John i. 29. *Behold e Lamb of God*, as John the Baptist said, pointing him with his finger.
Now, a lamb was the fittest creature that could to be a type of Christ, both in respect of harm- ssness, and also of usefulness. None more patient, none more profitable, than a lamb. So Christ, Isa. liii. 7.

But it may be asked, what kind of lamb is referred to?

I answer, It was a male lamb, to note his vigour and strength. And it was a lamb without blemish, signifying his absolute purity and perfection, 1 Pet. i. 19. In Christ there was no defect or distortion, no spot or deformity. So also it was a lamb of a year old; in the Hebrew it is the son of a year; a lamb in its prime, as we say. Now our Lord Jesus died in the prime of his age, between thirty and forty.

What, it may be inquired, was to be done to the lamb?

It was to be separated from the rest of the flock, and kept apart four days before. So Christ was chosen out of the people, and set apart from all eternity in the decree and counsel of God, to be a prince and a Saviour. It was also to be killed. So was Christ, he must die not a natural, but a violent, death, not in his bed but upon a tree, by the hand of violence; and that death of his is our life. Besides, the time of killing it was in the evening. So Christ suffered in the evening of the day, about three o'clock, at the time of the evening sacrifice. And he suffered in the evening of the world, 1 Pet. i. 20. Towards the latter end of the fourth day, that is, the four thousandth year from the creation.

But the main matter was, what they were to do with the blood, and with the flesh. As for the bones, they were commanded not to break one of them; which was accordingly fulfilled literally in our passover, John xix. 33—36. signifying, that notwithstanding his dying, he remained still able to save, even to the utmost.

*As for the blood:* they were to put it into a basin, with a bunch of hyssop to sprinkle it upon the door-posts of each house; and when the destroying angel came to destroy where the blood was, it was a warning to him that there was no first-born to be meddled with in that house, and so he passed them over.

Now our passover is Christ. And,

1. The death he died was a bloody death; and it was well it was, for without blood there could be no redemption, no remission.

2. This blood of his we are to sprinkle by faith upon the door-posts of our souls, that is, we are to make a believing application of it to ourselves: who loved *me* and gave himself for *me.* We are commanded to do this; it is our duty to do it; we sin if we do not do it. We must believe that he is both able and willing to save, to save *us*, thee and me, and thereupon to close with him as our Saviour.

3. Wherever this is done the destroying angel, that is, the justice of God, the curse of the law, the divine threatenings, the divine executioners, the avengers of blood, have nothing to do; the blood atones and pacifies. Here dwells a believer, one that

hath an interest in Christ, not in common only, but in special; away, away, meddle not here.

Now is this done, brethren? is Christ your passover? is his blood sprinkled on your souls?

If not, sprinkle it quickly; you know not how near the destroyer may be. Death may be, perhaps, at the next house.

If it be done, in God's name take the comfort of it, Rom. viii. 1; v. 9. Also, make it appear it is so, by your loving him, and living to him. The blood was to be upon the door-posts, visible to all that passed by, Rom. x. 10. But,

As *for the flesh*: they were to roast it, and when they had done, to eat it with bitter herbs, with their loins girt, and their staves in their hand.

Now all this had a spiritual meaning in it: our passover is Christ.

1. The roasting signified his inexpressible sufferings which he did undergo at his death. Was ever sorrow like his sorrow.

2. Our eating of it is by believing. Faith feeds upon Christ dying. As the mouth eats meat when it chews it, as the stomach receives and digests it, whereby the body is nourished and strengthened; so the believing soul feeds upon Christ. See John vi.

Once eating in a man's life doth not do. We eat often; so we must be often feeding by faith upon Jesus Christ: yesterday's meat will not do to-day's work.

3. They were to eat it with bitter herbs. Those bitter herbs to us are godly sorrow for sin: they that truly believe are penitent, they also mourn for sin, Zech. xii. 10. If you believe, and have never mourned for sin, suspect that faith. It is said the herbs were made into a thick sauce, to mind them of the clay that they made bricks with.

4. They were to eat with their loins girt, and their staves in their hands; which is the posture—of servants, girt for their work, Luke xii. 35, 36. We should be ready to every divine call, Ps. xxvii. 8. And—of travellers fitted out for a journey. They were out of Egypt, bound for Canaan, but a wilderness was in their way; so we are travellers to the heavenly Jerusalem. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

II. Christ our passover was *sacrificed*.

The Jews, by God's appointment, had several sorts of sacrifices or offerings. Some were bloody, as their burnt-offerings, peace-offerings, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings. Others were unbloody, as their meat-offerings, drink-offerings, of flour, wine, oil, &c.

Now Christ our passover was a bloody sacrifice; his life went for it; he made his body an offering, he made his soul an offering, and the design there was to make peace.

III. Christ was sacrificed *for us*.

Not only for our good, to set before us an example, but in our stead. By right we should have been sacrificed; No, saith he, let me be the sacrifice, and let these go their way. We are the Isaacs, he the ram. O what love was there in this! how should it for ever engage our hearts to him!

Under the second head the doctrine is,

I. *Therefore let us keep the feast.*

What feast? Not the feast of Easter; we know no such scriptural institution; each sabbath day is a Easter day; a day sanctified, and set apart for the remembrance of our redemption finished by Christ on his resurrection day, the first day of the week.

But there is mention made of Easter in Acts xii. 4. I consider that the Jewish passover is meant: for it is not likely Herod should owe such respect to a Christian festival.

But the keeping of Easter is ancient in the church. I answer, It was so, but the Scriptures are more ancient.

Not the feast of the Lord's supper; though it is true, that is a feast, and a feast upon a sacrifice, and a feast that we ought all to keep, and to keep as here appointed; we are guilty of a sin of omission if we do not. But,

By the feast here, I understand, rather, the whole course of our conversation in this world; it is here one word—let us *feast* it then; that is, let us feed heartily and plentifully upon this blessed Lamb, not poorly and sparingly. We ought every day to feast our souls upon Jesus Christ; upon his merit and righteousness, upon his flesh and blood spiritually, upon his word, his promises, the manna, the hidden manna. I say, every day, by fresh acts of faith. Cant. v. 1, 2. Not on sabbath days only, or sacrament days only, but *every day*—it is our own fault if we do not, Luke xvi. 19. And, which follows upon the former, let us *feast* it, that is, rejoice in the Lord always, Eccl. x. 10.

Mirth is two-fold. There is *vain, carnal mirth*, expressing itself in vain, frothy discourse, joking and jesting, which are not convenient, in youthful frolics, drinking, and dancing; enough of this, and too much, every where.

There is, also, *sober, serious, holy mirth*; spiritual joy, called joy in God, terminating in him as the immediate object of it; and this the word calls for again and again, Phil. iii. 1; iv. 4. It stands in opposition to a lumpish, heavy, drooping, melancholy spirit and behaviour, which prevails oftentimes even over the best, but they should chide themselves for it, as David, Ps. xlii. and xliii. Consider,

1. A sorrowful frame of heart is a grief to the Spirit of God, whose office it is to comfort us.

2. It brings an ill report upon the ways of God.

discourages standers by, lays a stumbling block—as the evil spies.

3. It is weakening to ourselves. If the joy of the Lord is our strength, Neh. viii. 10. as oil to the wheels, then a contrary frame of spirit causes us to drive heavily in duty. Remember but this one word, and believingly apply it, *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*, and see if it will not thence follow—therefore *let us feast it*. O how glad were the poor Israelites to be gotten out of Egypt! At passover time they made all outward shows imaginable of great joy and rejoicing.

II. Therefore *not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness*. Allusion is here made to another of the appointments at the Jewish passover, which was, that they should eat no bread with leaven in it during all the seven days that the passover lasted; and very strict they were in it, searching with candles, cursing themselves if they knew of any crumb kept, or hidden any where.

Now this the apostle applies here to naughty persons; he writes to have the incestuous church-member cast out by the censure of excommunication. Why so? Because he is like leaven, and leaven will spread, 1 Cor. v. 6. Guilt is infectious, therefore put him from among you. It ought still to be so amongst those that own Christ for their passover, 2 Thess. iii. 6.

He applies it also to naughty things, *malice* and *wickedness*. Those that call Christ their passover must not be *malicious*, must not be *wicked*. Malice is inveterate anger, and wrath, and hatred towards any person. Away with it, it is leaven, it sours the spirit of him in whom it is; sours his duties, God cares not for them. No leaven was to be mixed with any sacrifice, Lev. ii. 11. Malice sours the converse, exposes to manifold temptations, Eph. iv. 26, 27. It makes a man in God's account a murderer, 1 John iii. 15. Therefore, I beseech you all, as ever you expect benefit by Christ's sacrifice for you, purge out this leaven, Eph. iv. 31, 32; v. 1.

So likewise for *wickedness*. This is a general word, including all manner of allowed wilful sin; away with it, 2 Tim. ii. 19. There is good reason why you should. Is Christ the minister of sin? Did he die to obtain leave and liberty for us to live in sin? God forbid! We cannot think so, but rather the contrary, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

III. *But with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*. There is another thing compared in Scripture to leaven, which all they that keep the gospel passover must put away, and that is, hypocrisy, Luke xii. 1. Away with it, it will spoil all.

We must not be hypocrites, nor do any thing we do in hypocrisy; even disciples must beware of this. It is the cry of the world against us that we are such, but let us approve ourselves to God that we are not such, and then no matter.

We must not have a form of godliness without the power.

Nor a name to live without being alive indeed.

We must not do what we do to be seen of men.

We must not draw near to God with our mouths, when our hearts are far from him.

We must not make clean the outside and be careless what is within.

We must not look one way and row another, as Jehu did.

Suspect this evil; search for it; watch and pray against it. Contrary to all this is sincerity and truth; they differ like shadow and substance, like the picture of a man and a man.

It was the saying of one,—I know no religion but sincerity, John i. 14. It is the condition of the new covenant, Gen. xvii. 1. It will be our comfort and joy, 2 Cor. i. 12. Our strength and preservation, "The integrity of the upright shall guide them," Prov. xi. 3. "Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee," Ps. xxv. 21.

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## SERMON XIII.

### CHRIST IS OUR PORTION.

LAM. iii. 24.

*The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.*

THERE are several sayings in Scripture, both which men have said to their souls, and which their souls have said to them.

1. Which men have said to their souls.

Bad men—*Soul, take thine ease*, Luke xii. That was a naughty saying.

Good men—chiding sayings—*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?* Ps. xlii. and xliii.

Comforting sayings—*Return unto thy rest, O my soul*, Ps. cxvi.

Exciting sayings—*Bless the Lord, O my soul*, Ps. ciii.

2. Which their souls have said to them.

Among the rest, this is one, *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.* Where we have two things:

I. A doctrinal position or assertion. The Lord, that is, the Lord Jesus is a believer's portion.

II. A practical inference; *Therefore will I hope in him.*

In this method I shall handle it.

I. For the doctrine—The Lord Jesus Christ is a believer's portion.

I shall show, 1. The meaning of the word.

2. What in Christ is that portion; and,

3. What kind of portion Jesus Christ is.

*For the first,—The meaning of the word.* The word portion is sometimes taken for a piece or part of a thing, be it a less part or a bigger part.

Sometimes not for a part but the whole. We call our all our portion; all we have to trust to, to live upon. Such a one hath so much, or so much for her portion; provision made for her by her father. Now our heavenly Father hath made comfortable provision, set by a competent portion for every child of his, and that portion is Christ. He hath not divided Christ among them, given a part of him to one, and a part of him to another. Is Christ divided? No; but he hath given him all, all wholly and entirely to each one of them, so that each one may say, all Christ is mine, mine to all intents and purposes.

"The Lord," said the Psalmist, "is the portion of mine inheritance," Ps. xvi. 5. Instead of lands and livings assigned to us, he hath assigned Christ to us, as the Levites and priests were to have no other inheritance than the Lord, Numb. xviii. 20. So it is now. We are *heirs of God*, Rom. viii. 17: His testimonies are our heritage, Ps. cxix. 111. Such a promise as that, Heb. xiii. 5. is better worth than a thousand a year; "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

The Psalmist adds,—"and of my cup," alluding to feasts, where each one had his mess of meat set by his cup-side, and that was his portion for that time, Gen. xliii. 34. 1 Sam. i. 4, 5. Now, the Lord is the portion of every good man's cup, the mess he is to feed upon; and a worthy mess he is, his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Wicked men have a cup too, and the portion of a cup; and what is it?—"Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup," Ps. xi. 6. O fear and tremble lest this be your cup and your portion.

*For the second,—What in Christ is a believer's portion?*

All that he is, and all that he hath, both as God, and as God-man.

1. As God. All his wisdom, and power, and goodness is theirs. I say theirs, to be employed for their best benefit and advantage.

2. As God-man; as Mediator.

His merit and righteousness is theirs for justification; his blood for reconciliation; his sufferings and death to make atonement.

His Spirit and grace are theirs for sanctification; of his fulness they receive, John i. 16.

His comforts are theirs, to revive and refresh them when they are sad and drooping, Isa. l. 4. When the three young men were in the fiery furnace the Son of God was there; as, at another time, with a handkerchief wiping off sweat, and blood, and tears.

His word is for their guidance and direction in all their doubts and difficulties, like the pillar of cloud and fire.

His presence is theirs, for their preservation and protection in all their perils and dangers, Gen. xv. 1.

His crown, and throne, and kingdom are theirs, eternally to reward them, Rev. iii. 21.

*For the third,—What kind of portion is Christ?*

In general, he is a *worthy* portion—allusion to 1 Sam. i. 5.—that is, a dainty, delicate portion, excelling all other; none like it, worthy of all acceptation, that is to be readily accepted of, and closed with by each of us as soon as offered.

But in particular he is,

1. A soul portion—as here, He is my portion, saith my soul. The *portion of my heart*, Ps. lxxiii. 26. of my spirit, my inner man. The body with many people is well provided for, hath a large portion, whose soul in the mean time hath just nothing. Ah poor soul! the belly full, Ps. xvii. 14. the barns full, Luke xii. 19. the coffers full, but the soul empty and unprovided for. The rich man was clothed, Luke xvi. 19. These were his *good things*, v. 25. his portion. Christ alone can be a soul's portion, because he alone can answer the necessities and needs, the desires and expectations, of a soul. Four things we want, which the whole creation hath not for us, but he hath them all, and hath them abundantly, 1 Cor. i. 30.—wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.—Concerning the first, *wisdom*, Job makes hue and cry, and returns answer, *non est inventus—it cannot be found*, Job xxviii. 12, 14—28. The same is true of the rest. But in Christ they are to be had.

2. A sufficient portion. There is enough in him, enough and enough again to make us all happy. Merit enough, Spirit enough, grace enough, glory enough. He is El-Shaddai—God that is enough, Gen. xvii. 1.

3. A satisfying portion. The soul that hath him will own and acknowledge it hath enough, Ps. cxvi. 7. There is many a man who hath plentiful provision for this world, and yet is still thirsting after more; like the daughters of the horseleech, crying, Give, give, Eccl. v. 10. The reason is, God never put it into them to be our portion; if he had they should have satisfied; but he *hath* put it into Christ to satisfy, John iv. 13, 14. Not but that there are still desires after more, yet there is satisfaction with what is, nay, "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house," Ps. xxxvi. 8. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness," Ps. xvii. 15.

4. A sweet portion—exceedingly pleasant and delightful. It doth not only satisfy the soul that hath it, but fills it with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, Ps. xvi. 5, 6. It is a Canaan portion, which was a land flowing with milk and honey.

How sweet is the knowledge of Christ and gospel mysteries to the understanding part! Phil. iii. 7, 8.

How sweet are the communications of his love and favour to the affecting part of the soul! Ps. iv. 6, 7. Cant. ii. 3.

5. A suitable portion. If it were not suitable it would not be sweet; if not proper not pleasant. All the comfort of marriage depends upon suitableness. Christ is a meet-help. Gen. ii.

6. A sure portion. We cannot say concerning any portion we have in this world, it is a sure portion. Many a child that hath thought himself or herself secure enough, that their portion hath been in good hands, in process of time, it hath proved otherwise, either through death or deceit, or some miscarriage or other. But a Christian's portion, which is Christ, is to be sure in a good hand, Isa. lv. 3.

A part in Christ is, therefore, a good part, nay, the best part, because it cannot be taken away from us.

"One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her," Luke x. 42.—*shall not* is a sweet word, and because Truth hath said it, I am bound to believe it.—"It *shall* not be taken away."

*It shall not while we live.* The gifts and calling of God are without repentance: it is secured by the promise, and oath, and power of God.

We shall not waste it ourselves, as the prodigal son did his, and Adam his.

Neither men nor devils shall wrest it from us, John x. 28. It implies they will be trying, and endeavouring, but in vain.

*It shall not when we die.* If other portions be not taken from us, we must from them; but "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

*It shall not to eternity.* It is a lasting, everlasting portion. "God is my portion for ever," Ps. lxxiii. 26.—for ever—a sweet word.

II. We notice the inferences to be drawn from hence, and the improvement we are to make of it.

1. Then it follows that Christ is a rich Christ, who hath wherewithal to portion such abundance of people, as in all ages and generations have been portioned by him. The apostle calls it the *unsearchable* riches of Christ, Eph. iii. 8. He is a bottomless mine of merit and spirit; a boundless ocean of righteousness and strength; a full fountain of grace and comfort. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. That may be said of him that can be said of no other, he hath a store that can never be emptied. O how should this endear him to us! how should it draw out our thoughts and meditations into holy adorings of him! as Cant. v. 9, 10.

2. Then all that are true believers are really and truly rich people. I do not mean rich in the world; they are many of them far from that, poor day-labourers, poor servants in poor families; but I mean, rich towards God, rich in his account and esteem, Luke xii. 21. Jam. ii. 5. We read in Luke xvi. of a poor beggar called Lazarus, a godly man. And was he indeed poor that, when he died, was carried into Abraham's bosom? Would you choose his condition, or the rich man's? We are bid, Ps. xlviii. to walk about Zion. So walk about a believer's portion—count his bags, his coffers, his fields; the grace he hath, the peace, the hope he hath; and then tell me, if he be not a rich man. Job was once the richest man in the world, but on a sudden all was gone.—No, his grace remained with him, his patience, his faith, his hope.

3. Then how much doth it concern us all to make this portion ours.

May we do so? We certainly may, each of us.

But how? By a sincere, hearty, deliberate choice of it. Choose it, and thou shalt have it. Thus Mary did, Luke x. 42. "Mary hath chosen the good part."

Now choosing one thing implies refusing another.

We must refuse every thing else that you can name, and say of it, this is no portion for me.

As, the pleasures of sin are not; a merry, jovial, sensual, flesh-pleasing life, is not; merry company is not; wine and music are not; strong drink is not; rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, are not. Away with these then, they are no portion for thy soul.

And, the riches and honours of the world are not; gold and silver are not; houses and lands are not; mammon is not; preferment is not: therefore covet them not, sit loose to them, live above them.

Further, our own merit and righteousness is not. It is a garment too narrow to cover us, a bed too short to stretch ourselves on; therefore we must deny it, not trust to it, not rely on it.

What then must we take to?

To Christ, and to him only; *choose* him: that is, we must cordially accept of him upon the terms on which he is offered; come to him, roll ourselves upon him, assent and consent to his laws and government, saying, None but Christ, none but Christ. None but Christ, to justify, sanctify, rule, save me. None but Christ, to be my Prophet, my Priest, my King. It is a sign God has chosen us for his portion, when we have chosen him, Deut. xxxii. 9. Zech. ii. 12. Thus Moses, Heb. xi. 24—26. Here was, first refusing, then choosing; he weighed both in impartial scales, and upon mature deliberation took to that which he believed best. Something of that kind must be done in like manner by each of us. Though we have not such great things to refuse as he had, yet if we refuse

what we have, and choose Christ, he becomes our portion. Now is this done? have we thus refused, have we thus chosen? If we have, blessed and happy are we! If not, do it quickly, do it this day, do it now. Let thy soul say, Lord Jesus thou art, and shalt be, my portion; let others choose as they list, my sister Martha as she pleases, to be cumbered with much serving, this is my choice. Tell God so, as David, "Thou art my portion, O Lord," Ps. cxix. 57. John xxi. 15.

There are four sorts of persons, who should especially hearken to this motion.

(1.) Those that are young. The days of your youth are the days of your choice, your choosing days. Now choose Christ, Eccl. xii. 1.

(2.) Those that are poor, and low in the world. Thy father perhaps left thee but a small portion, it may be, ten or twenty pounds; it may be, fifty or a hundred pounds; aye, but thy heavenly Father hath provided a rich portion for thee. He hath given his Son to be thy portion, and wilt thou say, I am well as I am, I will have none of him? The less we have on earth the more need there is to make heaven sure; lest we should be doubly poor, poor here, and for ever miserable.

(3.) Those that are convinced, whose eyes are in some measure opened, whose hearts God hath touched. You are specially concerned, for if you fail of Christ for your portion, when *almost persuaded, not far from the kingdom*, how sad will it be! to go to hell by heaven's gates, like the foolish virgins! Therefore choose, choose, I beseech you.

(4.) Those that have children, Gen. xvii. 7. I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed—by entail—upon the same terms.

5. Then if Christ be our portion, and we can make out our title upon good grounds, and that we have thus chosen, then it is our duty to *hope* in him; as here, "Therefore will I hope in him," rely upon him, trust to him. People are used to do so in that which is their portion. I have a hundred pounds, says one, to live upon; another, I have two hundred; if the worst come to the worst that will maintain me. Is Christ thy portion? Nay, but is he so indeed? Thou hast then enough to live upon. If he be thy portion, he may well be thy hope, thy refuge.

A refuge—*As to the things of this life.* Thou art well provided for, thou shalt want no good thing, Ps. xxxiv. 10; cxlii. 5. If all thy creature-comforts should fail, thou mayest rejoice in thy portion, which fails not, Hab. iii. 17, 18. As David, when all was gone, "he encouraged himself in the Lord his God," 1 Sam. xxx. 6.—though flesh and heart fail. Suppose a traveller robbed, all about him taken away, yet if he has more at home, if his portion be safe—if his cisterns be drawn dry, yet if the fountain is flowing—he can rejoice. So should Christians rejoice in their portion.

A refuge—*As to our everlasting condition.* 1 Cor. xv. 19. We have hope in this life, but not in this life only. When we die all our other portions leave us, Ps. xlix. 17. and if we have no Christ to take to, how sad will it be! But if he *be* thine, fear not, thou mayst rejoice in hope of the glory of God. "Why art thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day?" 2 Sam. xiii. 4.

6. Then we should carry it as those whose souls can say the Lord Christ is their portion.

In all holy obedience before him, Ps. cxix. 57. fearing to offend him, caring to please him. For though it be not possible to lose the portion, it is possible to lose the comfort of it.

In a holy contempt of all other things in comparison with him. How high do some women carry it that know they have a great portion—they spend accordingly. So should we,—this is worthy, Col. i. 10. Remember, thou art a King's son. And we should carry it in holy joy, and cheerfulness of spirit, Phil. iv. 4.

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## SERMON XIV.

### CHRIST IS OUR PROPITIATION.

1 JOHN iv. 10.

*And sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

JOHN, the beloved disciple, breathes nothing so much as love throughout this epistle. He gives us here a superlative instance of love—not ours to God, but God's to us, in sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

DOCT. That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is sent of God, to be the propitiation for our sins.

Show, I. The meaning of this.

II. What kind of propitiation Christ is.

III. What we learn from it.

I. Explain the meaning of this.

Propitiation is a hard word, but few understand it. It is used but thrice in all the New Testament,—here, 1 John ii. 2. and Rom. iii. 25. The latter word is used, Heb. ix. 5. and there translated the mercy-seat,—"And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy-seat,"—the propitiation.

1. In that sense it is true, Jesus Christ is our mercy-seat.

Now the mercy-seat was a broad plate of pure gold laid upon the ark, in which were the two tables of the law, for a covering to it, just as long and as broad every way as the ark was; having above it the two cherubims with their wings stretched out, between which was the Shechinah, or the manifestation of the presence and glory of God, who is said to dwell between the cherubims. See Exod. xxv. 17,

21. Now this mercy-seat was a type of Christ, he is our mercy-seat.

As that was of pure gold, so he is pure and perfect and without spot.

As that was just as long and as broad as the ark or coffer in which the law was, so Jesus Christ, by the obedience of his life, did fully answer to all the commands of the moral law, without failing or offending in the least tittle; just as long and as broad; and by the obedience of his death did fully perform all that was required by the mediatorial law laid on him by the Father.

As that covered the ark, and so was between the pure eye of God, dwelling between the cherubims, and the holy law put into the ark, so Jesus Christ comes between us, as sinners and transgressors of the law, and the wrath and vengeance of God due to us. It is therefore called the mercy-seat, because it is the blessed medium or mean of divine mercy towards us, Heb. viii. 12. The same word implying, it is through Christ alone as our mercy-seat.

2. It hath another signification—*propitiation*; which is as much as propitiatory sacrifice. Sacrifices among the Jews, by God's appointment, were of several sorts, with reference to the design and end of offering them. They were especially of four sorts:

Some were merely to honour God: those were called burnt-offerings, because the whole beast was burnt.

Others were, when something was wanting to obtain it: those were peace-offerings, peace including every good thing.

Others were, when some mercy had been obtained, to give thanks for it; called thank-offerings, Ps. cxvi. 17.

Others were, to make atonement for sin, called sin-offerings and trespass-offerings, a bullock, or a sheep, or a goat, or the like, duly offered, was a means to make reconciliation for the sin of the offerer. Not that divine justice could be thereby satisfied, but the divine will and pleasure was thereby performed, and it *sanctified to the purifying of the flesh*, Heb. ix. 13. that is, continued to the offerer his right and title to all the privileges of the earthly Canaan, which by his sin he had forfeited. Now our sin-offering, trespass-offering, propitiatory sacrifice, is Jesus Christ: these all pointed at him; they were the shadows, he is the substance, 1 Cor. 7. 2 Cor. v. 21.

II. What kind of propitiation, or propitiatory sacrifice, or sin offering, is Christ?

1. Jesus Christ is a propitiation appointed of God. He did not put himself upon it, but was called to it. He that knew best what would please him, did himself set him forth, Rom. iii. 25. This is a great support to faith in our addresses for peace and pardon, Ps. lxxxix. 19. He is the same that brought the ram to Abraham.

2. He is a propitiation accepted of God, Eph. v. 2. Therefore acceptable to him, because appointed by him.

But how do we know that he was accepted?

There were ways formerly of testifying acceptance by signs, as by fire coming down from heaven and kindling the sacrifice, Lev. ix. 34. 1 Kings xviii. 38.

But this was done by two extraordinary ways:

The one, by a voice from heaven, expressly affirming it, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5.

The other, by raising him from the dead. No other sacrifice ever was so; no beast, Rom. iv. 25.

3. He is a spotless propitiation. The beast that made atonement must be so; without defect, excess, blemish; else no acceptance, Lev. xxii. 20. Now such was he; conceived, born, lived, died, without sin, 1 Pet. i. 19. Heb. ix. 14.

4. He is a slain propitiation. Without blood there was no remission, and it must be life-blood. The beast must die, else it could not be a propitiatory sacrifice. Now Christ died to make atonement, Rom. v. 10; iii. 25.—in his blood. The death he died was a bloody death, most bloody.

5. He is a voluntary propitiation, a free-will offering. Such the beasts offered in sacrifice were not, they would have lived if they might; therefore *bound with cords*, Ps. cxviii. 27. Howbeit, the offerer was to be willing, Lev. i. 3. But here, the same was both the offerer and the offering; and both willing, John x. 18. Eph. v. 25. Ps. xl. 7, 8. With the same severity wherewith he checked the devil, persuading him to worship him, Matt. iv. 10.—he checked Peter, dissuading him from sufferings, Matt. xvi. 23. See Luke ix. 51; xii. 50.

Why then did he pray—"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?" Matt. xxvi. 39.

To show that he had the sinless infirmities of human nature, one whereof is, to fear dying: which, if he had been without, his yielding to it would not have been so strange. A shame to us to be so backward in our duty to him.

6. He is a universal propitiation.

The only one—instead of all other sacrifices, though but once offered. The legal offerings were repeated often—yearly, nay daily, twice every day; an evidence of their insufficiency. But Jesus Christ once only, and that once enough, Heb. ix. 25—28; x. 11, 12. If a plaister will cure a sore at once laying on, what need is there of a fresh one. This condemns the popish mass, which themselves own must be repeated often.

It is of universal extent—to all that will accept of it, and close with it: "not for ours only," that are Jews, his countrymen and kinsmen according to the flesh; but to the Gentiles also, all the world over, John iii. 15. *the world*, consisting of Jew and Gentile, Isa. xlix. 6. 1 John ii. 2. This is good news for us sinners of the Gentiles; if we sin, *we*

have an advocate, *we* have a propitiation; a sacrifice offered *for us*.

It is of universal extent likewise—to all sins, even presumptuous sins not excepted.

7. He is a complete propitiation. To a complete propitiation three things were required: a priest—an altar—and an offering.

If either of these were wanting there was no atonement. Now all these three met here in Christ.

The offering was his human body and soul, that is, himself as a man, Eph. v. 2.—His body, Heb. x. 5, 10. His soul, Isa. liii. 10. The same nature that sinned suffered.

The altar which sanctified the gift was not the cross, (what could the wood of the cross do towards that,) but the divine nature; the Godhead; the eternal Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. That was it that bore him up under his sufferings, as the altar did the sacrifice; and that gave worth and value to them, to make them a price sufficient, Acts xx. 28.

The priest was himself the offering, as God-man. See the definition of a priest, Heb. v. 1. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins."

*Taken from among men.* So was he.

*Ordained.* So was he, anointed, sealed—not without an oath, as Aaron, but with an oath, Ps. cx. 4.

*For man.* So was he; not for angels.

*In things pertaining to God, to offer*

*Gifts*, first-fruits, thank-offerings. So he, now in heaven, presents our prayers, praises, alms.

*Sacrifices for sins.* So he, *ut prius—as before*, himself upon the cross.

8. He is a continual propitiation; not continually to be offered, but of continual virtue and efficacy. We read often of the continual burnt-offering. The atonement made upon the cross reaches us now as fully as if he had died but yesterday. The last sinner that shall live to be reconciled and saved by him, shall certainly find the truth of this. That burthen of the 136th Psalm, concerning God's mercy, may be sung also concerning Christ's merit,—it *endures for ever*. There is a fountain of it, Zech. xiii. 1. We come,

III. To the application of this.

Show, 1. What need there was of this propitiation, or propitiatory sacrifice. Might not God have spared his Son, and the Son have spared him? Wherefore was this waste? allusion to Mark xiv. 4.

It was no waste, the work of our redemption and salvation could not otherwise have been brought to pass, for ought we know.—To those that slight it, it is indeed waste.

We have sinned; have we not? by omission—by commission—in thought, word, and deed. Where is the man, the woman, the child, that can say, I have no sin, am under no guilt.

If we have sinned God is angry with us. It cannot be otherwise. All sin is a provocation to the pure eyes of his glory; it grieves him; it vexes him; his holy nature is against it; so also is his righteous law, which forbids it, which threatens it, let the sinner be who he will, 2 Sam. xi. 27.

If God be angry, some course must be taken to appease and pacify him, it will not wear off of itself. There must be some propitiation, something to make atonement. Now what should that be, Ps. xl. 6. Mic. vi. 6, 7. This man bid fair, but it would not do. Nothing of our own, prayers, tears, alms, penances, pilgrimages, nothing of any one's else for us, will do. Ps. xlix. 7, 8. No, no; *he* is the propitiation, *he*, and none but he.

Show, 2. What is to be done by us, that he may be our propitiation. I beseech you, hearken to this, for it is the main matter. Take away *propitiation* if you take away *our*—as to any comfort we can have in it.

In general, we must do it in like manner as the guilty Israelite was to do, when he brought his bullock or his lamb to make atonement for what he had done.

Now what was that?

(1.) He was to lay his hand upon the head of the beast, Lev. i. 4. So must we lay a hand of faith upon Christ, making a believing application of his merit and righteousness, each of us, to ourselves—to our own soul, and to our own sin;—who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*; a propitiation for *my* sins. Without this there is no atonement.

(2.) He was to confess his sin, and to tell why he brought his offering, Lev. v. 5. acknowledging if he had his desert he himself should die, and not the bullock. So must we—as David, Ps. li. 4. as Job, ch. xxxiii. 27, 22. as the prodigal, aggravating his fault against himself, Luke xv. with grief of heart and shame of face, and this with the hand on Christ's head, Zech. xii. 10. Now how have we done this? do we use to do it daily, in ordinary, in extraordinary?

(3.) He was to comfort himself, and to go away rejoicing in the atonement made, and to sin no more: so must we, Ps. lxxxv. 8. This is called receiving the atonement, Rom. v. 11.

Show, 3. What is like to become of us if this be not done, and if Christ be not our propitiation. We must each of us ourselves be made a sacrifice. It is usual in Scripture to set forth the judgments of God upon the wicked under this notion, Isa. xxxiv. 6. Jer. xlvi. 10. Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18. Hence God is styled a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29. We are described as stubble. Now what work is there like to be, when fire and stubble meet, Isa. xxvii. 4.

Two things Christ suffered in being made a sacrifice:

*Pain* extraordinary, in body—in soul.

*Shame* extraordinary, in being crucified without the gate, naked, between two thieves, scoffed at.—Now pain and shame in extremity, and eternal, is hell; and that is the portion of those that must be their own sacrifice, Ps. ix. 17.

Pain *in* soul, from the gnawings of a guilty conscience, the worm that never dies,—Son, remember. In body, to be cast into a lake of brimstone and fire, into utter darkness, tormented, not a drop of water, Luke xvi.

Shame *without*; with wicked company—in the place of souls—God, saints, devils laughing; and all this eternal, Dan. xii. 2. Hear this, and fear, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. You that are delivered from all this, see the mercy of your deliverance by Christ your propitiation.

Show, 4. What must they do whose propitiatory sacrifice Christ is?

(1.) They must sacrifice themselves, soul and body, to him for a thank-offering, Rom. xii. 1, 2. Ps. li. 17.

(2.) They must sacrifice their sins absolutely and entirely, for a burnt-offering, a whole burnt-offering, Luke xix. 27. They must be crucified as he was, Gal. v. 24. Crucifixion is a slow but sure death.

(3.) They must sacrifice their all, freely and cheerfully, for him, if thereunto called,—estate, name, liberty, life. As Abraham his Isaac, Gen. xxii. Rom. viii. 36. Compare this with Rev. vi. 9. Now how do we like this?

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## SERMON XV.

### CHRIST IS OUR FREEDOM.

JOHN viii. 36.

*If the Son therefore make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

THIS *Son* here is, for certain, our Lord Jesus Christ; it can be no other; the *Son of God*, the *Son of man*, so as never any one was besides him.

That which is said here concerning him—*the Son*—or rather, which he says concerning himself, is,

I. That he hath a way of making people free, making himself over to them to be their freedom; *If the Son make you free*—this is implied.

II. That the freedom that he gives is extraordinary freedom; those that are made free by him are free *indeed*, no other freedom is like it, none to be compared with it; *ye shall be*—this is expressed. The explaining and proving of these two together with the application, will be the work of this day.

I. Christ hath a way of making people free—he is their freedom.

Freedom supposes bondage. The people to whom this was spoken, could readily enough reply to him, *We were never in bondage to any man*, v. 33. It was not true that they said, understand them in what sense you will.—Bondage is two-fold:

*Corporal*, which is the bondage of the outward man; and,

*Spiritual*, which is the bondage of the soul.

As to the former; their fathers had been oft in sore bondage. Were they not so in Egypt to Pharaoh; to the Philistines, and Ammonites, and Moabites, in the time of the Judges? So for seventy years together in Babylon to Nebuchadnezzar; nay, were not they themselves at this very time in bondage to the Romans? But as to the latter, which is spiritual bondage, concerning which our Lord speaks; they had never been otherwise than under that, v. 34. So that it was plainly the pride of their hearts; they were loth to own their condition. So are others besides them, Rev. iii. 17. But whether we will own it or not, it is certain there is a spiritual bondage, which we are all under by nature, and from that bondage it is that Jesus Christ makes free.

We were born in bondage. Paul could say, in a civil sense, I was born free; and so many of us say, but in a spiritual sense we cannot, for we were born captives, prisoners, slaves. O that God would make us this day sensible of the misery of such a condition, that if we be yet in it, we may make haste out of it; and, behold, here is one who will help you out. If we be out of it, and are already made free, we may see what cause we have to be thankful all the days of our lives.

Have we not since sold ourselves to work wickedness, *sold to be* bondmen, 2 Pet. ii. 19.—overcome.

Three things are the cause of this bondage:

1. The guilt of sin. By that we are bound over to divine justice in a bond, the penalty whereof is eternal burning. Sinner, thou dost little think of this, but certainly it is so. Thy sins are thy debts, and they are bond debts, and the bond will be sued shortly; and there will be an arrest, and thou wilt be cast into prison, if some course be not taken to prevent it, Luke xii. 58, 59. Now from this we are made free by the Son's dying for us upon the cross, whereby he paid the debt, and fully satisfied God's justice; and had his acquittance, when he rose again from the dead, Rom. iv. 25.

2. The corrupt nature, called the sin that dwells in us; the flesh, the old man. By this we are so fettered and chained to divers lusts and pleasures, that we are perfect slaves: the drunkard is a slave to his lust of drinking; the wanton to his wantonness; the covetous man to money. One owned he was a slave to tobacco; another said, when he began to love it, meaning, to be a slave to it, he left it. And as to that that is good, there is no desire towards it; but quite the contrary; there is enmity and averseness. Just

as it was with the poor woman, Luke xiii. 11, 16. she could not *lift up herself.* When Satan hath bound the soul it is crippled. Now from this we are made free by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as a sanctifier, renewing us in the whole man; breaking the power of indwelling sin, planting a contrary principle, Rom. vi. 14—19, 22.

3. The fear of death. Fear generates bondage, which bondage is more or less according as the thing feared is, and according as the fear prevails, in the measure and degree of it. Now we are all by nature subject to this bondage, through fear. Though it does not appear alike in all, there are few but one time or other have their qualms upon every apprehension of danger; though not every one to such an excess as Belshazzar, whose knees knocked each other, or as Herod, who feared lest John was risen from the dead.

From this we are set free by the same Spirit as a comforter, abating this slavish fear, and working holy boldness and confidence; so that now the man can cheerfully look death in the face; can look God himself in the face, knowing he is a reconciled Father, Rom. viii. 15, 16. The death of Christ purchased this, Heb. ii. 14. and the Spirit of Christ applies it to the soul. Let him be afraid to die that is afraid to go to heaven. But,

II. What kind of freedom is it? In general,

1. A freedom *indeed*, that is, real freedom, substantially free. It is no fancied thing, no dream. Many a man that ruffles in the world, and is the world's freeman, doth but seem free; really he is a slave, under the power of sin and the devil. But if the Son have made thee free, thou art free *indeed*—free from the guilt of all thy sins past, from the beginning of the world to this day; free from the power and dominion of sin, for time to come. It may tyrannize over thee, but it no longer *reigns* in thee, of *choice* and with *consent*;—free from slavish fear, causing bondage.

2. It is *inward* freedom. The soul is made free, the mind and conscience. Now the soul is the man, the better, the more noble part. If it be well with that, all is well.—Though thy outward condition be low and mean, perhaps a poor servant, the drudge in the family, an apprentice to some hard master, working hard, and faring hard; no matter, if the Son have made thee free, thou art free to God, the Lord's freeman, 1 Cor. vii. 22.

3. It is *costly* freedom; it cost him dear that obtained it for us; namely, the Son.

There are two ways of obtaining freedom for captives.

The one by force; fighting to procure it.

The other by price; paying a sum of money for ransom.

Both these ways the Son obtained our freedom for us.

He paid a price for it to the Father, bought it out, even the price of his own most precious blood. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. i. 19. Less would not serve either that or nothing.

He fought it out with the devil, and death, and the grave, and by strength of hand rescued us. It is true, himself was taken prisoner, but they could hold him but awhile, Acts ii. 24. Thus he is *made redemption*, 1 Cor. i. 30.

4. It is *comfortable* freedom. Comfortable to us, that enjoy the benefit of it. It is attended with many exceeding great and precious privileges, which should each of them be so many arguments with us, if we are not free, to desire and seek it; if we are, to rejoice in it and be thankful for it. Those that are free of corporations enjoy many immunities and franchises, which strangers are unconcerned in, for the having of which, they serve seven years. But what are those to believers' franchises? what to those that belong to God's freemen? And, which is more, they may be thine immediately, this very day, without seven years' service to obtain them. Allusion to 1 Sam. xvii. 25.

What are the privileges of the Lord's freemen?

In general they are of two sorts:

*Those we have by the way, now, in possession.*

1. There are sundry evil things that we are free from:

(1.) The guilt of sin; which is taken away by the pardoning mercy of God in the blood of Christ. Even this, where it is denominated a man, a blessed man, Ps. xxxii. 1, 2.

(2.) The domineering power of sin; so that it is no more on the throne in us, Rom. vi. 14. Though it remain, it doth not reign. It is as the Canaanites were in Canaan, after the Israelites had conquered it; they were under tribute.

But some one may say, I find the power of sin great in me.

But art thou a willing servant to it, as formerly? dost thou *yield* thy members? I hope not so, you reply; I can truly say, the evil I would not that I do, and though with my flesh I serve the law of sin, yet with my spirit the law of Christ. Then be of good comfort—the freedom is gradual.

(3.) The irritating power of the law;—this is said to be the *strength of sin*, as water to lime, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Sin takes occasion by the commandment, Rom. vii. 8. If such and such things were not forbidden, we should have no mind to them; but now, when enjoying this freedom, it is otherwise. There is then in the heart a dear love to the law of God; the will consents to it, rejoices in it.

(4.) The unscriptural commands, injunctions, and impositions of men in religious matters, wherein we have to do immediately with God. Not their civil commands in civil things. We say not so, Rom. xiii. 1. Tit. iii. 1. Nor the scriptural commands in

ıcred things, as when they command days of public ıstıng or thanksgiving when there is occasion, beıuse for this there is warrant in the word of God. he king of Nineveh proclaimed a fast, and the good ings of Judah. But their unscriptural commands ı the things of God, when they lay a necessity upon ıose things wherein the gospel calls to liberty: in ıch a case we are bid to stand fast in the liberty herewith Christ has made us free," Gal. v. 1. Cor. ii. 23. Herein the Pharisees were faulty; and see hat the Master says, Matt. xxiii. 9, 10.

(5.) The *evil* of afflictions: not from afflictions ıemselves; the best men have oftentimes a larger ıare of those than others; but from the evil of them, 's. xci. 10. The evil of an affliction is the wrath f God in it. As much as there is of that in it, so ıuch there is of real evil. Now, by the Son we are reed from that wrath; his blood hath pacified it. 'hat which afflicts is love, for our good, Rev. iii. 19. Ieb. xii. 5—8.

(6.) The sting of death and the grave. Not from leath itself, nor the grave itself, but from the *sting* f it. What that is, we read, 1 Cor. xv. 56. Now in is done away, therefore death is unstung; it nay hiss and frighten, but it cannot hurt.

2. There are sundry good things that we are free o.

(1.) We have freedom of access to the throne of grace; we may come thither as oft as we will, and ıtay there as long as we will. The oftener we come, ınd the longer we stay, the more welcome we are, Heb. iv. 16. Liberty of speech, free to speak our whole nind. It is through the Son, Heb. iv. 15. We would ıccount this a privilege were it to the presence of ın earthly prince or potentate. One said he would desire no more towards the making of him rich, than ın interview for one hour in a day with his king.

(2.) We are free to all the promises in the whole Bible. Take which thou wilt, if Christ be thine, thou hast an interest in it, a right to it, and mayst comfortably plead it, as if named in it. This is clear from Heb. xiii. 5. a promise made to Joshua upon a particular occasion, yet *we* may say *the same.*

(3.) We are free to the lawful and comfortable use of every good creature of God. This is certainly one thing wherein the Son hath made us free. For instance, in our good, 1 Tim. iv. 3—5. Some have thought, and taught, and themselves practised, otherwise; but it is a mistake. They may as well revive and establish the whole law of Moses in those matters. The reason ceases, it is not such blood now that atones. It is true, in Acts xv. there was a temporary appointment with reference to their present circumstances, but it was but temporary, and those ceasing, the injunction ceased, Titus i. 15. We do not live now among Jews, likely to be offended.

*Those we are to have at home hereafter in the other world.*

No condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. No wrath to come, 1 Thess. i. 10. No Depart ye cursed. But a crown and kingdom that fadeth not away. All the Lord's freemen are heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17. We are free to heaven now, every day, in our daily addresses, and we shall be free to the mansions there when we go hence, John xiv. 2, 3.

USES. Hence we learn,

1. What a difference there is between one man and another, according as they are, or are not, in Jesus Christ.

Those that are in Christ Jesus are the Lord's freemen. The Son hath made them free, and they are blessed and happy; they are more *excellent* than their neighbours, upon all these accounts, Acts xvii. 11.

Those that are not in Christ Jesus are the devil's bondmen; rowing in his galley; tugging at his oar; doing his drudgery, Luke xv. 15. 2 Tim. ii. 26. having first overcome them, 2 Pet. ii. 19. Amongst men, what a difference there is between a servant and a master, an apprentice and a freeman: With a great sum, saith the captive, purchased I this freedom, Acts xxii. 28.

2. How much it concerns each of us to examine, as to ourselves, which of the two am I? Hath the Son *made me* free? It may be known, and it were good for us to know.

Those that the Son hath made free, cannot but be sensible of a great change from what was to what is. Were the Israelites, think you, sensible when they were out of Egypt, and afterwards, when out of Babylon? Those poor men that have been at Algiers in slavery to the Turks, and are come home again, some by flight, some by exchange, some by ransom, (they come often to your doors,) ask them, Are they sensible of a change? they will tell you, Aye. Canst thou say, I was darkness, dead, blind, captive; but now, I enjoy the light, I am alive, I see, I am free?

They are endued with a free spirit. There is certainly such a spirit, and it is one of the excellent spirits, Ps. li. 12. free to every good work, ready, willing, forward, Ps. cxxii. 1; xxvii. 8; cxix. 108. Not perfectly or universally so, but then it is free.

3. What is to be done that we may be made free? There is no way but one, and that is, to apply ourselves to the blessed Jesus, the Son here spoken of.

Tell him thy sense of present bondage, thy desire to be made free, and thy consent to the gospel terms; tell him that thou art weary of sin's service, and art willing to be his servant, or rather freeman. Know for thy encouragement, he is sent on purpose. Isa. lxi. 1. Compare Luke iv. 18. The gospel proclamation is like that of Cyrus, Ezra i. 1, 6. Could I assure all apprentices, servants, suppose all prisoners, galley-slaves, of freedom, how welcome would be the tidings!

4. What must they do that are made free?

They must own their deliverance and their deliverer with all thankfulness. The bells ring when the time of servitude is out, Ps. xvi. 16. Sing the song of Moses, Exod. xv. 1. Compare Rev. xv. 3.

They must stand fast in their liberty, and press to be made more free.

They must promote and further the freedom of others. Tell them the difference you have found.

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## SERMON XVI.

### CHRIST IS OUR FOUNTAIN.

ZECHARIAH xiii. 1.

*In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness.*

THIS fountain is the Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom it is here promised, that he should be an open fountain, implying, till then he had been a fountain shut up, a fountain sealed. And so he was.

Now, 1. We are told here concerning the time when it should be—*in that day*; that is, in the gospel day, the famous day of the New Testament, when God was manifested in the flesh, taking our nature upon him, and becoming incarnate. Then this fountain began to be opened. It was opened more and more after his resurrection, when the apostles went forth and preached the gospel to all the world. What was the tidings they brought? Behold, a fountain opened; behold, a Redeemer, a Saviour; as the angel told at first, Luke ii. 10.

2. Concerning the persons for whose use this fountain shall be opened,—it is said, *the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem*. Those were, first the nation and people of the Jews; to them first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless "them, in turning away every one from his iniquities," Acts iii. 26. In all places where they came, they began with them, Acts xvii. 1, 2. But upon their refusal, they turned and opened it to the Gentiles, Acts xviii. 5, 6. And it was well for us that it was so—*The house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem* now, are the Christian church, scattered far and wide, here and there, upon the face of the whole earth. Among them it is that this fountain is open, not elsewhere: The rest of the world knows nothing of it.

3. Concerning the intent and design of opening it, and that is, *for sin and for uncleanness*. That is a brave fountain indeed, that will wash from *sin, and from uncleanness*—that is,

From sin, which is uncleanness, polluting and defiling the soul, as dust or mire doth the body. And,

From all sin, and particularly from that sin, which we commonly call the sin of uncleanness. Seventh-commandment sins of all sorts. There is cleansing to be had even for them. And where? At this fountain; namely, with our Lord Jesus Christ, who is made unto us of God, amongst other things, *our fountain*.

DOCT. That the Lord Jesus Christ is our fountain.

Show, I. Wherein.

II. What kind of fountain.

III. The application.

I. Wherein is Christ a fountain?

When it is said Christ is our fountain, it holds forth two things:

1. Fulness. A fountain is not like a cistern: a cistern may be full, but the fulness of it may be emptied; so may the fulness of a fountain too, but then a fountain, or a spring, fills itself again immediately. So doth not a cistern. A cistern may be full, but it doth not rise up and run over, as a fountain doth, and that continually. For this reason the corrupt nature in us is compared to a fountain, Jer. vi. 7.—bubbling up in vain thoughts, inordinate desires, corrupt affections. Now in Jesus Christ there is a fulness, and it is a fountain-fulness, Col. i. 19. *fulness—all* fulness, and all fulness *dwelling*, and *by the good pleasure of the Father*.

What is he full of?

The two things that our poor souls have most need of, towards the making of us happy.

Merit and righteousness for justification; and

Spirit and grace for sanctification.

He hath merit enough; his merit is of infinite value, sufficient to take away all sin, Heb. vii. 25. —*able* to save. And

He hath Spirit enough, to sanctify us throughout, to break the power of every lust, to strengthen us to every good word and work.

He is such a fountain as can open in us a fountain, springing up unto eternal life, John iv. 14. John i. 16.

2. Uses—fulness.

A fountain is of great use. What striving was there in Abraham's time, and Isaac's time, and Jacob's time, about wells of water, Gen. xxi. and xxvi. When Achsah was to ask a boon of her father Caleb, *Give me*, said she, *springs of water*, Judg. i. 15. Were we to ask but one thing of our heavenly Father, there were reason it should be, Lord, give us a fountain. Why, blessed be his name, he hath given us one. Not only, springs of water, useful for our outward man, a *land of springs*, like Canaan, but a Christ, a Christ for our souls.

A fountain of water is useful for three things:

(1.) For quenching of thirst. How glad is the

weary traveller, or labourer, of a spring of water; though it be but fair water. O, says he, it hath saved my life. The Israelites in the wilderness, when there was no water, what an affliction was it to them. When they had it, it was sweet as honey and oil, 1 Cor. x. 4.

Now this fountain is very useful for this purpose. Is thy soul athirst? athirst for peace, pardon, life, salvation, for grace, strength? Here is a fountain for thee, come and drink, Isa. lv. 1—buying frightens; therefore, come freely. Thou art called, John vii. 37. Rev. xxii. 15. See the discourse of our Lord Jesus with the woman of Samaria, John iv. 10—14. Alas! the most of men know not what this means—they are sensible of no need, and, therefore, of no desire, but, Ps. xlii. 1. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

(2.) For washing away filth. Water cleanses; we could not tell what to do without it—to make our bodies, our clothes, comfortable. This fountain also is cleansing. Sin defiles, leaves a blot, a stain, upon the soul.—It is uncleanness.

The guilt of it is so: from that we are washed by the blood of Christ, satisfying God's justice and making atonement; also purging the conscience—1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5. Heb. ix. 14.

The corrupt nature, which is the root and principle of it, is so, Ps. xiv. 3. From this the Spirit of Christ washes in the laver of regeneration, Tit. iii. 4, 5. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

(3.) For watering the earth, and making it fruitful. They use to have fountains for that purpose in their gardens, to be ready in a dry season to fetch water to refresh the plants. Herein also Christ is our fountain. Did he not water us every moment, grace in us would languish and die, Isa. xxvii. 3. See Isa. xliv. 3, 4. Now it is the second of these especially that this text speaks of—Jesus Christ is a cleansing fountain; we have need of him as such, for we are filthy and defiled.

II. What kind of fountain is the Lord Jesus.

As a cleansing fountain he hath these properties.

1. He is full, he hath enough wherewithal to cleanse us; merit enough, spirit enough. Under the law they had cleansing appointments as to ceremonial pollutions, but ours is beyond theirs.

They had blood, but it was but the blood of bulls and goats, and that in a bason only; but we have the blood of the Son of God, not in a bason, but a fountain full of it.

They had water; one particularly called the water of purification, made of the ashes of a red heifer, kept in a pot for the purpose, Numb. xix. 9. But that availed nothing towards taking away the moral pollution. The blood of Christ doth that. The papists, in imitation of this, have holy water; a mere vanity. They had also water in a brazen laver of vast extent, in Solomon's time, for the priests to wash in when they drew near to worship, 1 Kings vii. 23, 26. Compare 2 Chron. iv. 5. But what is all that to a fountain? In this fountain we are to wash every day, especially when we draw near in duties of worship; Ps. xxvi. 6. "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord,"—that is, in Christ's blood, which makes as if innocent.

2. He is a flowing fountain. It is of the nature of a fountain to flow forth; if it doth not flow, it is not a fountain. There are continual issues every day from the blessed Jesus, both for justification and sanctification, or we were undone. This was signified by the blood and water that came out of his side.

3. He is a holy fountain. We have a spring in this county called by name Holy-well,* but it makes none holy that go to it; it is well if it defile not some by the superstition of it; but here is a holy well indeed, and holy water indeed, that makes them holy, holy, that are washed in it. How unclean soever before, if washed with the grace of Christ that uncleanness is done away. We are made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4.—not in perfection at first, but by degrees, renewed more and more till presented without spot to God, Eph. v. 27—faultless, Jude 24. O the rare virtue that is in this fountain; it makes a sinner a saint.

4. A healing fountain.

In John v. we read of a pool, called the pool of Bethesda, which had a healing virtue. This is the true Bethesda. Our uncleanness is like that of the leprosy, a disease; this cleanses, as Naaman by washing in Jordan, 2 Kings v.—as the leper in Siloam.

5. An open fountain. If it were of greater virtue than it is, and were shut up, what the better should we be? No, it hath pleased the Father to lay him *open*. He is not an enclosed fountain, but a common fountain; as a common propitiation so a common fountain, 1 John ii. 1, 2.—As common as the light or air.

Open and common to all persons, Jew and Gentile, high and low, rich and poor, bond and free; whosoever will may come.

Open at all times, night or day, summer or winter, John viii. 2.—*early in the morning*, John iii. 2. Nicodemus *by night*, and both found entertainment with him—Allude to Gen. xxix. 8. There is no stone to be rolled away.

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* In Flintshire.

1707-8, July 13. Went to visit at Newmarket. My wife and daughter with me. We called at Holywell. I was much affected to see a papist long in the well, praying and crossing herself. Surely they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. We can scarce persuade people to pray in their warm closets. They pray, and pray long, in the cold water, and are reproached for it. They shame us. *Rev. Matthew Henry's Diary, MSS.*

Open and free as to terms. We say—What is freer than a gift? He is the gift of God, John iv. 10. the *free* gift, Rom. v. the *unspeakable* gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15. Though thou hast no worthiness, no matter, he is worthy. Cordial acceptance makes him ours. He forgives freely, Isa. xliii. 25.

6. The only fountain. Besides him there is no other, Acts iv. 12. We may think, perhaps, as Naaman—"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean?" 2 Kings v. 12. But no other fountain will do.

III. The application, in four particulars.

1. Here is matter for thanksgiving to God, who,

(1.) Appointed this fountain in the counsel of his will from all eternity, John iii. 16.

(2.) Opened it in the fulness of time, after it had been shut for four thousand years, Gal. iv. 4.

(3.) Opened it *to us*; to us of this nation, country, neighbourhood; of this present age and generation. Here is matter of thanksgiving, that the gospel is not a hidden gospel to us, that it is yet day-time with us, that we are within hearing of the joyful sound.

(4.) And, specially, that he hath brought us to it, and washed us in it. This is certainly the mercy of mercies,—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," Rev. i. 5. This is more than angels can say. When ten lepers were cleansed, only one returned to give thanks, Luke xvii.

2. Here is matter for conviction; and O that I knew what to say, and how to order my speech, so that it might be convincing; but Elihu, my God is he that must do it. Convincing! Of what? Of your need of this fountain to wash in.—That which is unclean doth certainly need washing; but thou art unclean, I mean, thy soul, thy mind, thy conscience; inwardly, spiritually. I am sure thou wast so by nature; born in guilt and filth; like an infant weltering in blood and pollution, Ezek. xvi. And art thou washed? When, and how? And by whom, and with what?

I am sure, that every sin thou hast committed hath added to that original pollution, and hath made thee more and more filthy, Ps. cvi. 39. Matt. xv. 19, 20. Even vain thoughts, Jer. iv. 17. So is the world also, Jam. i. 27. Nay, our best duties have their pollutions, Isa. lxiv. 6. But there is one particular kind of sins, those against the seventh commandment, that is especially called uncleanness. And have we been in no sort guilty of that, neither in thought, word, nor deed? That query of Solomon's is a searching one—"Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" Prov. xx. 9.—Even those that are washed have need to wash their feet, John xiii. 10.

3. Here is matter for exhortation:

(1.) To that which is best. To keep yourself clean, and to keep your way clean, which must be by taking heed thereto according to the divine word, Ps. cxix. 9. Apply to the fountain.

(2.) To that which is next best. If any pollution happen, to make haste to your fountain, and wash speedily; I mean to the Lord Jesus, confessing, bewailing, believing. The sooner the better—as in the case of other dirt; allude to 2 Kings v. Go wash seven times. You that have never been with him for mercy, for grace, have most need of all. Feel it, and believe there is a fountain just by thee; allude to Gen. xxi. 19.

4. Here is matter for encouragement. This sweet promise hath relieved many a poor soul that had been sinking.

(1.) That it is a fountain; therefore, mercy enough, merit enough.

(2.) That it is an open fountain, not under lock and key, but free and common to all; none excepted, that except not themselves by unbelief.

(3.) That it is to the house of Israel and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; that is, all the members of the visible church.

(4.) That it is for sin indefinitely, and particularly for uncleanness.

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## SERMON XVII.

### CHRIST IS OUR WISDOM.

### 1 Cor. i. 30.

*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom.*

This plainly and expressly proves what I affirm concerning Jesus Christ, that he is made unto us of God *wisdom*; not only that he is wise, nay wisdom itself, v. 24. and Prov. i. and viii. but that he is made *unto us* wisdom, and that *God* made him so; that is, God the Father, who first puts us into him. We were not born in him, but we are put into him by renewing grace, as a graft or scion into the stock, and then he makes him to us *wisdom*.—So that here are four things asserted:

1. The original and fundamental privilege of all true believers; they *are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1.

2. A consequential privilege following upon that; thereupon *he is made unto us wisdom*.

3. The sole author both of the one and of the other, and that is *God*, God the Father—of him, are ye in Christ Jesus.

4. The scope, end, and design of this, *v.* 31.—that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.

Doct. That Jesus Christ is made of God wisdom to all true believers that are truly in him.

Show, I. How we are to understand this.

II. What practical inferences may be drawn from it.

I. How are we to understand this?

1. *Objectively.* As he alone is, the object about which all true wisdom is conversant, Col. ii. 3. Wisdom is either divine or human, the wisdom of God, or of men.

He is the *wisdom* of God, as the *power* of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. because the divine power and the divine wisdom were never so manifest in any thing that ever he did as they were in Christ, that is, in the great work of our redemption by him. All his works are made in wisdom, Ps. civ. 24. Prov. iii. 19. The footsteps of it are to be seen in all the creatures, in the several parts and members, and their proportions, especially man, Ps. cxxxix. 14. He governs the world in wisdom, wisely ordering all events to the great end of his own glory, and his people's good: when we murmur we charge God with folly, Job i. But above all, in our redemption by Christ; in the contrivance of it, finding out such a way wherein righteousness and peace are met together, mercy glorified, and yet justice satisfied. In Eph. iii. 10. it is called the manifold wisdom of God, such as angels wonder at.

He alone is the object of all *our* true wisdom. There are other things about which wisdom is conversant, but none like Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 7, 8. Our chief wisdom consists in closing with that wise design of the Father, acquainting ourselves with it, assenting and consenting to it, acquiescing in it, John xvii. 3. So that if you ask, who is a truly wise man? I answer, he that is truly a Christian, not that is barely called so, but that understands, believes, and acts as such, Deut. iv. 6. They are called *Wisdom's children*, Luke vii. 35. The world counts them a company of fools, but God esteems them wise.

2. *Effectively*, as he is the author and finisher of all that in us which is true *wisdom*. Now, that is *grace;* grace is true wisdom, and nothing else is so. It is not wisdom to be wise to do evil, wise, as Ahithophel was, to plot mischief; nor is it wisdom to be able to manage affairs dexterously and to advantage; but wisdom is, to know Christ Jesus the Lord. Now whence have we this wisdom? It is the Spirit of Christ that works it in us, Eph. i. 17. 1 John v. 20. He is the author, Heb. xii. 2. Of his fulness we receive, John i. 16. His is the eye-salve, Rev. iii. 18. But, further, for explication—It may be inquired,

1. *How is it said he is made unto us of God wisdom?*

(1.) In respect of eternal appointment and designation. The Father did from everlasting ordain, decree, and purpose, that his Son, Christ, should be a common head to us, deriving wisdom to all his members; a common fountain, whence they should fetch it. The head in the body we reckon the seat of wisdom; here so, Col. i. 19. compare John i. 16.

(2.) In respect of effectual application, in the fulness of time. He is then made wisdom to us when we begin to be made wise by him, and that is when we are savingly converted. Then, and not till then, are we turned to *the wisdom of the just*, Luke i. 17. But,

2. *What are the special acts of this wisdom, by which it may appear whether we are so turned, so made wise?*

(1.) If Christ be *made unto us wisdom*, we have been in some measure convinced of our own folly and foolishness; this is the first step, 1 Cor. iii. 18. A fool thinks himself wise, Prov. xxvi. 12. As the Pharisees, John ix. 40. A wise man knows himself a fool, as David, Ps. lxxiii. 22. Agur, Prov. xxx. 2, 3. Now inquire, How is it with me? What is the opinion I have of myself?

(2.) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we are brought to see the excellency and usefulness of wisdom, and begin to prize it at a high rate, and to beg it of God rather than any thing else in the world. As the pulse of desire beats, the man is; not desire in word and tongue, not in sudden flashes of wishing and woulding, but the inward, hearty, settled desire—as of *joy*, Ps. cxxxvii. 6. Not the desire *in* the heart, but *of* the heart. Would we do as Solomon, seek an understanding heart? have we done so? 1 Kings iii. 5. If God should say to us, as to him, "I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart," it would be a good evidence of being saved.

(3.) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, we have chosen God for our chief good and highest end, and the Lord Jesus Christ as our alone way to him. If so, we are wise; if not, to this day we are fools. The proper act of wisdom is to determine the choice to right ends; as in other things, so in spiritual things, the things of the soul. Inquire what is your chief good and highest end. Is God? to please and honour him, or self? Can you say, with the Psalmist "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26. There are few who can say this. Paul complains that "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's," Phil. ii. 21. To seek Christ's things is to seek such things as he sought. Now *those* were, to please his Father. And have you learnt Christ as your way, and do ye walk in him? Can you say, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?"

(4.) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, it hath taught us to fear the Lord, and to depart from evil, Job xxviii. 28. There is this difference between wisdom and knowledge—knowledge is in speculatives, wisdom is in practice. Many have a great

deal of the former, that have none of the latter; good heads, but bad hearts and bad lives. See the properties of heavenly wisdom, Jam. iii. 17. It was thus with David, Ps. cxix. 98—101. Eph. v. 15, 16.

(5.) If Christ be made unto us wisdom, it hath made the things of time to be as nothing to us, and the things of eternity to be all in all; it has altered our thoughts and pursuits. Inquire how is it with us as to this. Can we say, as Paul, "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal?" 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Things that are seen, and not seen, are either good things, or evil things.

What are the good things temporal, riches, honour, pleasure, in comparison with the good things eternal, the vision and fruition of the blessed God, and the blessed Jesus? Can we despise the former for the latter, as Moses, Heb. xi. 24—26.

What are the evil things of time in comparison with the good things of eternity?—Whether are we most afraid of the frowns of men or the frowns of God, a prison or hell? It was a high charge against Job, but false, "Take heed, regard not iniquity, for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction," Job xxxvi. 21. Daniel chose to disobey the king rather than God, *ch.* vi. So did the three young men, *ch.* iii.

II. The practical inferences.

If Christ be made wisdom to those that are in him, and only to thpse, then,

1. They that are not in him are not wise. Nay, I must speak plain, they are fools. Nabal is their name, and folly is with them. We are forbidden to say to our brother, Thou fool, under the pain and penalty of hell-fire, Matth. v. 22. that is, in wrath and bitterness to judge any person as to his eternal estate, but not, when it is spoken out of love, to convince; and, God knows, that is my end. Paul calls the Galatians, *foolish* Galatians, Gal. iii. 1. Christ, the two disciples, nay, and all the rest of them in that matter, *fools*, Luke xxiv. 25. I speak it to your consciences, and if your consciences speak it to you, hearken to them—Unconverted Christless people are fools.

I prove it by three arguments:

(1.) They choose like fools. Is he not a fool, that when a pebble is offered to him by one, and a pearl by another, chooses the pebble, and refuses the pearl? Was not Esau a fool, in parting with his birthright for a mess of pottage? O sinner, whatever thou thinkest of it now, the day is coming when thou wilt call thyself a thousand fools, for preferring the trash of this world before the heavenly treasure—the dross, the dirt, of the earth before the glories of the eternal kingdom! It is recorded of Mary, as an act of the highest wisdom, and she is commended for it, that she chose to sit at Christ's feet, to hear his wisdom, Luke x. 42. As the queen of Sheba at Solomon's. See Luke xi. 31.

(2.) They count like fools.

They count themselves wise, and religious people a company of fools, when themselves are the fools, and the religious wise, John vii. 48, 49. Luke xviii. 10.

They count upon time to come as their own, and presume accordingly; when, alas! it is not so. He that reckoned upon time is properly styled a fool. Luke xii. 20. They count upon going to heaven when they die, but are miserably mistaken, as the madman at Athens, that pleased himself with the conceit that all the laden ships were his.

(3.) They carry it like fools.

The carriage of a fool is vain and frothy; there is no seriousness in him. Are there not many such with whom it is so? Art not thou one of them? "It is as sport to a fool to do mischief," Prov. x. 23. Art thou under the power of a vain mind?

He carries it like a fool, that hugs his worst enemy in his bosom, and turns his back upon his best friend; and doth not the sinner so? Is not sin thy enemy, the devil thy enemy? and are not they made much of, and Christ, thy best friend, slighted and made nothing of? One of the fathers brings in the devil pleading against such at the day of judgment—Lord, doth not this man deserve to be damned, that would be ruled by me, that never did nothing for him, and would not.

2. They that are sensible of their want of wisdom and would be wise, may learn hence whither to go and what to do, that they may attain it. The way is to apply thyself to the blessed Jesus, who is *made unto us of God wisdom.* He is our Joseph. As they that wanted corn must go to Joseph, so they that want grace, any grace, the grace of wisdom, must go to Christ.—And plead this text with him—Lord, art thou *not made unto us of God wisdom?*

What need is there of this plea?

Universal need, every day, in every thing. They that have most, have need of more.

(1.) We cannot carry it as we should in any relation without wisdom, neither as superiors, inferiors, nor equals.

What need have magistrates of wisdom! Ps. ii. 9—A conviction of this made Solomon ask as he did. 1 Kings iii. 7—10.

Ministers are in the same situation, Col. i. 28. What a plague are foolish shepherds! Zech. xi. 15. On the other hand it is promised, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding," Jer. iii. 15.

So are masters of families, husbands, wives, parents—They all need wisdom that they do not miss it by severity so much, or indulgences too much—Neighbours especially need it: if without wisdom how can we walk in it, Col. iv. 5. so as that we may do them good, and they do us no hurt?

(2.) Nor can we carry it as we should, in any condition, without wisdom.

If we prosper and thrive in the world, there is need f wisdom, to manage it so that we be not insnared, ot destroyed by it. If in affliction it is necessary, iat we may keep the mean between fainting and espising. If reproached, reviled, persecuted, to arry it as we ought towards our persecutors, with ieekness and yet with courage. Jam. i. 3—5.

(3.) Nor can we carry it as we should in any duty ) be done to God or man without wisdom.

If we pray, we need wisdom that we do not ask miss. If we hear the word, we need wisdom that we iay discern between wheat and chaff, that we may take ur own portion. If we wish to reprove, we need risdom to know when, how, Col. iii. 16. If to reconile differences, 1 Cor. vi. 5. If to manage good discourse, Prov. xxxi. 26.—to attend our particular alling, so as not to intrench upon our general calling; to keep the world in its due place: we require risdom in all.

(4.) Nor can we carry it as we should in any difficult case that lies before us, nor tell how to determine for the best, without wisdom, Eccl. x. 10. I nay spare my pains to prove we have need of it; we ll know it and feel it by ourselves, if we know and eel any thing.

How is it to be supplied?

I told you, by having recourse to the blessed Jesus n a humble sense of our need, Prov. iii. 5, 6.

We must pray, as Paul, Acts ix. 6. Jam. i. 5.

We must study the word; that must be our Abel, ur counsellor, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Let the word of Christ lwell in you richly in all wisdom, Col. iii. 16. What hat speaks, Christ speaks.

We must then believe, put on Christ, learn Christ, valk in Christ, which is the certain way to be made vise.

3. Here is matter of unspeakable comfort to all rue believers, that *Jesus Christ is made wisdom*, that s, as some interpret it, that all that infinite wisdom hat is in him as God, and all that infused wisdom vhich he had as God-man wherein he grew, Luke ii. 52. is all made over to us, to be employed for our ;ood. Dost thou know the meaning of this? If here be any matter or thing wherein that wisdom nay stand thee in any stead, it is thine; as if a voman marry a wise counsellor, or a wise physician, f she need the help of either, it is ready: so it is iere. Allude to Prov. xxxi. 11. Apply it,

1. To our particular, private affairs, especially n the great turns of our lives. If thou art in Christ, ie will order them for thee, and he will order them visely, Eph. i. 11. according to the counsel of his will. Therefore, cast thy care upon him, commit thy way unto him, Ps. xxxvii. 3—5. Isa. xxx. 18.

Therefore, submit to his disposals, quietly, patiently; of choice, cheerfully: wisdom would have it so, sees it best it should be so, and shall I gainsay?

2. To the public affairs of the church and nation. Our enemies are not only many, mighty, malicious, but cunning, crafty, subtle; there are Ahithophels amongst them. No matter, wisdom is our friend, knows how to undermine and countermine, Job v. 12. As he did Haman. The pilot is wise, though the sea is rough.



## SERMON XVIII.

### CHRIST IS OUR WAY.

JOHN xiv. 6.

*I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.*

THESE are the words of our Lord Jesus concerning himself, wherein he says, *I am the way:* the way, whither? To the Father. Is there no other way? No, no other way, *no man cometh—but by me.* And what else is he besides the way? The *truth and the life* also. *The truth*, therefore we may safely believe what he says. *The life*, therefore he is worth the seeking after.

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is our only way to the Father, and besides him there is no other way.

The Father is God. You would all come to God, would you not? especially to God as a Father? Then hearken to me to-day; my errand is to set you in the right way. Abundance of people quite miss their way to God, and so perish in by-ways. There is but one right way, and that is Christ; therefore "kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

I. Show, in what sense is Christ the way to the Father.

II. The properties of Christ as a way; what kind of way he is.

III. What improvement to make of it.

I. In what respects is Christ the way to the Father?

There are seven things which are our concernment with the Father, to which Jesus Christ is the only way.

1. Our acquaintance with the Father. It concerns us all to know God, and be acquainted with him, John xvii. 3. Job xxii. 21. Now there is no being acquainted with God but by Jesus Christ; no being savingly acquainted with him. We may know something of him by the works of creation, but not unto salvation; *so*, only by Christ, John i. 18. *He hath declared him—*

By what he was, Heb. i. 3.

By word of mouth; he preached concerning him.

By the works he did.

By suffering and dying. It declared him a just, righteous, sin-hating God; therefore, when Philip desired him, John xiv. 8. "Show us the Father," see his answer,—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," *v.* 9.

2. Our access to the Father. We are coming to him daily in the duties of his worship; are we not? by prayer and supplication, alone, and with our families, in ordinary, in extraordinary, cases. But if we come without Christ, we come out of the right way. *Through him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father,*" Eph. ii. 18. that is, through his merit and mediation, Eph. iii. 12. Rom. v. 2. By faith in Christ, applying that merit and mediation of his unto ourselves, and appearing in it before God; as Jacob in Esau's clothes.

3. Our acceptance with the Father.

If we come and are not accepted, what the better are we? Paul laboured, "that whether present or absent, he may be accepted of him," 2 Cor. v. 9. So should we. Now that is only in and through Jesus Christ, Eph. i. 6. This has been proclaimed so by a voice from heaven, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Pleased with our persons: allude to Gen. xliii. 3.

Pleased with our performances, "Ye are an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, *acceptable to* God by *Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As no sacrifice was accepted, unless offered by a consecrated priest upon the right altar;—so here. Now Christ is both, our priest and altar, sanctifying the gift, Heb. iv. 14, 16.

4. Our atonement with the Father. The Father and we are fallen out; he is displeased towards us; how shall we get the quarrel taken up? There is no way but one, and Christ is that way, Eph. ii. 13, 14. 2 Cor. v. 19. Rom. v. 1. He made peace by the blood of the cross; his death atoned and pacified God's offended justice; made amends for the wrong that we have done him; and we may comfortably plead it, accordingly, as our righteousness.

5. Our adoption by the Father. Adoption is that that makes us the children of God. We are by nature the devil's children, branches in the wild olive, and our fruit is accordingly. Adoption cuts us off from that stock, and grafts us into a better stock, a good olive; puts us into God's family. Now, how is this done? Only by Jesus Christ; he is the way, Gal. iii. 26. Eph. i. 4, 5. John i. 12. And upon our receiving of him, it is done immediately.

6. The accomplishment of all the promises of the Father. The promises are our great charter; they are both exceedingly numerous and exceedingly precious.

But our Lord Jesus was the way to the making of them; they were made in him, that is, supposing his undertaking. Out of Christ God was a threatening God only, ever after the first promise, Do and live—was slighted.

Also he was the way to the making of them good, 2 Cor. i. 20. If ever we have occasion to put a promise in suit, it must be in his name, in the virtue of his merit and mediation.

7. Our admission into the everlasting kingdom of the Father. To say he is the way to the Father, is as much as to say, he is the way to heaven. Heaven is a place, a city, a city that hath foundations; now every city hath a way to it, and so hath this city—and that way is Christ. There our Father dwells, and keeps court. When we come thither, we shall see him, and enjoy him, only by Jesus Christ.

It was he that purchased it for us, by the merit of his death. We had never had title to it, if he had not so bought it. He is entered as our forerunner.

It is he that prepares us for it, by his Spirit in the work of sanctification, beginning, carrying on, finishing it, Ps. lxxxiv. 11. Col. i. 12, 13. He is our Joshua, both conquering the promised land for us, and dividing it to us, leading us over the Jordan of death.

II. I am to show what kind of a way Christ is.

In general, when it is said Christ is a way, it must needs be that he is so in a singular and peculiar manner, and that his properties, as such, are extraordinary; and so they are, even made up of seeming contradictions.

1. He is both a new way and an old way; as the command of loving one another is both an old command and a new command, 1 John ii. 7, 8. So it is here.

He is the *old way* to the Father, even from the beginning; the way that Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, all went; in and through him they were accepted, and justified, and saved, Jer. vi. 16.

He is the *new way*—expressly said to be so, Heb. x. 20. New in respect of clearer discovery and manifestation; held forth before under types and shadows, now laid open; so that he that runs may read. For this new way we are concerned to sing a new song, Ps. xcvi. 1; xcviii. 1, 2.

2. He is both a dead way and a living way.

*Dead:* all other ways are dead things, and therefore he must die, and so he did, upon a tree, or else he could not have been our way to God. If by dying he had not paid the ransom, undergone the penalty, there could have been no peace for sinners.

*Living:* he that was dead is alive again, and lives for evermore. In Heb. x. 20. he is called a *living way*—as here—*and the life.* If he were not living, and the life, he could not be a way for us to the Father. It was his rising again that was our justification, Rom. iv. 25.

3. He is both a broad way and a narrow way.

*A narrow way*, Matt. vii. 14. We cannot walk

it, and have elbow-room for our lusts. The rictness of the divine precepts is the hedge com-assing this way about, both on the right hand and the left, which must not be transgressed and aped over by those that intend Christ for their ay to the Father, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

*A broad way*—in respect of the true spiritual hristian liberty, which they have that walk in it. he same that is our way is our freedom, John viii. 3. Ps. cxix. 45. 2 Cor. iii. 17. There is no liberty sin or to do what we list, but liberty as opposed bondage through slavish fear, Rom. viii. 15, 16. n this sense he is our way to the Father.

4. He is both a high way, and a low way.

*A high-way*, in the sense of Prov. xv. 24. *above* to ie wise. They that walk in Christ, walk in a way it of sight to the carnal world; a way out of their en, they know it not, nor what belongs to it. Also the sense of Isa. xxxv. 8. the high way is the ady way, the next way; so is Christ to the Father. lso in the sense of Ps. lxviii. 18. because he him-lf is on high, at the right hand of the Father, far bove principalities.

*A low way*, because he so humbled himself as he id, that he might be the way trodden under foot of ien; and because they must humble themselves, nd be meek and lowly in heart, that will walk in it: enying ourselves our own righteousness and merit, uke ix. 23.

5. A rough and rugged way, and yet a plain and nooth way.

*Rough and rugged*, in respect of the stones of umbling and rocks of offence that are in it, to iem that perish, 1 Cor. i. 23. "Unto the Jews a umbling-block."—That he that could not save him-lf from being hanged, should save us from being amned—that by his stripes we should be healed. is death is our life.

*Smooth and plain* to him that believeth, 1 Cor. i. 24. Pet. ii. 7. Such, though fools, shall not err there-, Isa. xxxv. 8. "Knowledge is easy to him that derstandeth," Prov. xiv. 6. to be sure, the know-dge of Christ and him crucified, is so to every be-ever.

6. A persecuted way, and yet a sweet and plea-nt way.

*A persecuted way*, both with hand and tongue—sect every where spoken against, Acts xxviii. 22. hat sect was the Christian sect, the followers of e Lord Jesus; every where spoken against. Aye, d besides this, they that walk in it meet with many cross of God's laying in the course of his provi-nce, Matt. vii. 14. "Strait is the gate, and narrow affliction—is the way, which leadeth unto life."

Yet it is a *pleasant way* notwithstanding, Prov. iii. '. The way of justification by faith in Christ is rtainly so, beyond any other way, so sweet, so com-rtable to the enlightened soul; no other is compar-able to it. The way of holiness also, and new obedi-ence—carries its own reward with it, Ps. xix. 11.—in the testimony of a good conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12.

7. It is a way beset with enemies on every hand, and yet secure and safe to them that walk in it.

*Beset with enemies.* Those are, the devil, and the world, and the flesh; all against Christ as our way to the Father, all seeking to waylay us, and to turn us aside into by-paths, 1 Pet. 5, 8.

Yet *secure and safe* to them that walk in it; their heels may be tripped up, and they may stumble and fall, but they shall not be utterly cast down, Ps. xxxvii. 24. *for the Lord* upholdeth him with his hand. See 1 Pet. i. 5. "Kept by the power of God." If divine power be not sufficient for our preservation, what is?

8. An open way, and yet an enclosed way.

*Enclosed* in the decree and counsel of God, which is secret and unknown. There is a remnant only according to the election of grace, Rom. xi. 5. Matt. xx. 10.—few chosen.

Yet *open* in the proclamation of the gospel; as a fountain open, Zech. xiii. 1. Whosoever will may come, freely, Isa. lv. 1, 2. So come ye to this way; come and welcome. It is not a way shut up from any of you, one or other.

9. A beaten way, and yet but few walking in it.

But *few* at one time, and in one place; here and there a traveller.

But *beaten* by the multitudes that have been in all ages, and are, and shall be, as will appear, when they shall all come together, Rev. vii. 9.

III. What improvement are we to make of this?

If Christ be the way to the Father,

Then, 1. If we are out of Christ, we are out of the way. Suppose a traveller hastening onward were informed, in answer to an inquiry respecting the road, that he was out of the way, how would he be surprised! especially—if the business were earnest,—if it were drawing towards night,—if the false way were a foul way,—and if the danger were imminent if he went on.—And how culpable would he be, if he had been warned of that danger beforehand and would not heed; and still more, if a guide had been offered to lead him in the right way, and he had refused him.

Now this is thy case, sinner. O bethink thyself—it is to the Father thou wouldst go.—If thou get not into Christ, thou wilt never come to him. There is no other way. The way of sottish ignorance is not the way; nor of sloth, and carelessness, and luke-warmness; nor of wickedness, and profaneness, swearing, drunkenness; nor of formal profession, in guilt and hypocrisy; nor of thy own merit and righteousness; nor of trusting to the mediation of saints and angels. There is no way but Christ.

2. Exhortation. Then, "as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." *Receive Christ* Jesus the Lord, this day. Ye that never yet

received him, close with him as your way to the Father, your only way, renouncing all other; none but Christ, none but Christ.

Having received him, *walk in him.*

Walk in his life and example, as your copy to write after, 1 John ii. 6.

Walk in his death, as your comfort and joy, Rom. viii. 33, 34. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

Walk in his name, merit, and mediation, in his righteousness and strength, in every thing wherein you have to do with God, living and dying. If he be thus your way, he will be your life too.

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## SERMON XIX.

### CHRIST IS OUR ENSIGN.

Isa. xi. 10.

*And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.*

By this root of Jesse here spoken of, is certainly meant our Lord Jesus Christ, who came, according to the flesh, from Jesse, the father of David.

It may be objected, It should then be said of him rather that he was a branch of Jesse, than the root of Jesse.

I reply, He was a branch of Jesse as man, but as God he was the root of Jesse; as David, Ps. cx. 1. compare Matt. xxii. 45.

Or thus: The family of Jesse was like a tree cut down and worn out, and in process of time, from one of his roots *in a dry ground*, Isa. liii. 2. that is, from Mary the virgin, a poor woman of the meaner sort, came one strangely and unexpectedly, and that was Jesus Christ the man, the branch, and he is the ensign here promised. And *in that day*, namely, the famous day of the gospel so much talked of, *there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.*

Doct. Jesus Christ is our ensign.

I shall inquire,

I. What an ensign is, and how we are to understand it. And,

II. What kind of ensign Jesus Christ is, and what good lessons we may learn from it.

I. What is an ensign?

An ensign hath two significations, a standard, and a standard-bearer.

1. A standard, that is, a flag or banner, such as both horse and foot companies of soldiers have, each company one.

2. A standard-bearer. We call him that carries that flag, the ensign of the company. Now here it is taken not for the person, the standard-bearer, but for the thing, the standard, because it is said, to it shall the Gentiles seek; and yet, to show that the same that is the ensign, or standard, or flag, or banner, that is, the thing, is also the ensign-bearer, the standard-bearer, the person, it follows, *and his rest shall be glorious.*

II. What kind of ensign is Christ.

This ensign is an ensign extraordinary, such as is not to be found elsewhere; a none-such ensign. And so you will say when I have laid before you these ten properties which it hath: and in the opening of each property, I will show you what the particular duty is which it calls for from us.

1. He is a military flag or ensign; a banner of war. We call the coats of arms which noblemen and gentlemen give for the distinction of families in times of peace, *insignia*, ensigns: but such an ensign Jesus Christ is not; he is an ensign for war, a soldier's ensign. Elsewhere he is said to be given for a *leader, and a commander to the people*, Isa. lv. 4. He is called the *captain of our salvation*, Heb. ii. 10. here, *the ensign.*

This teaches us that Christianity is a warfare, and that Christ and Christians are warriors; he the captain, and the ensign, and they the soldiers.

But who are the enemies, and what is the quarrel?

The enemies are, the devil, and the world, and the flesh. The cause we are in is the glory of God: remember this, as many of you as are baptized, you are the enlisted soldiers of the Lord Jesus, and look to it that ye be good soldiers, prepared for hardness, 2 Tim. ii. 3. fighting under him not only as your captain, but as your banner. He himself is your banner. We are every day, upon one occasion or other, engaged with one temptation or other; now what do we do? Do we yield, suffer ourselves to be overcome, led captive? Is that like a good soldier? Or, do we resist and fight it out in the strength of God's grace, standing fast in the way of our duty, keeping our integrity, whatever it cost us? This is like a good soldier, Heb. xii. 4.

2. He is a movable ensign. Ensigns, flags, or standards, march from place to place, from one town to another, as there is occasion, at the appointment of the captain. Now Christ our ensign, is Christ held forth in the preaching of the gospel; where the gospel is preached, there Christ the ensign is. He is said here to stand, in respect of his abiding a Saviour, Heb. xiii. 8. Yet he moves as an ensign. And who knows not what removes the preaching of the gospel is subject to; how it is for a time in a place, and then after a while gone again, and another place hath it that had it not before. This was signified by the Old-Testament tabernacle, which was a movable tent, made to be suddenly taken down and set up again, and carried hither and thither "Lord, who shall dwell in *thy tabernacle*," Ps.

v. 1. that is, thy church on earth. It was awhile at hiloh, then at Gibeon, then at Jerusalem. What s our duty then? To make a good use of it while 'e have it, John xii. 35, 36. Some people bid the nsign be gone, as the Gadarenes did.

3. He is a gathering ensign. The design and end f an ensign is to gather together all that either are nlisted soldiers, or have a mind to be under such r such a captain. Now, in the preaching of the ospel, Christ, by his ministers, proclaims, Ho, every ne that will be on my side against sin and the devil, ome to me, whether Jews or Gentiles, come, come; s here, *to it shall the Gentiles come:* "And he shall et up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble he outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dis- ersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth," . 12. See the prophecy of good old Jacob, Gen. lix. 10. And of Isaiah, *ch.* lvi. 8.

There is a gathering together to Christ, which is to ome, 2 Thess. ii. 1.

There is a gathering to Christ, which is present. Now, now it is our duty to gather to him; till we lo so our condition is sad and perilous. We are he devil's soldiers fighting the devil's battles. Away o me, saith Christ. Now what says thy soul? shall he call be an effectual call? It is as much as I an remember forty-nine or fifty years ago, to hear alk of the king* setting up his standard, that is, his ensign, at Nottingham, after that at Shrewsbury; he language whereof was, All that will fight for me gainst the parliament, come hither,—for my prerogative against their privilege,—and multitudes came. That is the use of a standard or ensign. Now the Lord Jesus, I say, in like manner, invites you all to come to him, and to fight for him, as Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 32. Lord, whoever will not, I will. Let thy soul thus answer. Our gathering to Christ freely and willingly must be not only as soldiers, to their standard—but,

(1.) As sheep to their shepherd. He is the good and great Shepherd. Are we joined to him? Do we follow him? John x. 28. Cant. i. 7, 8.

(2.) As doves to their windows, Isa. lx. 8. If they once get to their windows they know they are safe there. Return unto thy rest,—Ps. cxvi. 7.—to thy Noah,—as the dove, Gen. ix.

(3.) As the children to the father. Children, to be sure *good* children, love to be where their father is,—to be taught, and instructed, and employed by him; so should we, 1 John i. 3.

(4.) As the eagles to the carcass, Matt. xxiv. 28. for food. It is strange how far off sometimes they will reach the scent of a carcass. So here,—Where Christ is powerfully preached, and comfortably exhibited in holy ordinances, there, O my soul, saith the lively Christian, will I resort. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them: Who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness," Ps. lxxxiv. 1—10. This is the right gathering of churches, to gather souls to Jesus Christ, to fight under his banner.

(5.) As the chickens to the hen, Matt. xxiii. 37.

4. He is a guiding ensign. The use of the flag is to show the soldiers which way to march: the way that the ensign goes they must go. Our Lord Jesus, as our ensign, is our guide to go in and out before us, Isa. lv. 4. a *leader:* and but for this leader how oft should we be at a loss; as the Israelites in the wilderness, but for the cloud and fire.

He leads us by his word and Spirit; his word outwardly, as the rule; his Spirit inwardly, as the principle, Isa. lix. 21.

He leads us also by his pattern and example, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Matt. xi. 29. John xiii. 13, 14. Now inquire, I beseech you, is it your daily care, every day, in every thing, to walk after this guide? Is Christ your guide to the ale-house, to be drunk there? Are you following him as your flag, when you are going into wicked company? I know you will say no; then how are ye his soldiers?

5. He is an unseen ensign. I mean, unseen with bodily eyes, wherein he differs from other ensigns. They are visible things; but by an eye of faith we see him, we behold him, Heb. xi. 27. This looks like a contradiction, but it is not, 1 Pet. i. 8.

6. He is an uniting ensign. It is by the flag that belongs to the company, as much as by any thing, that all the soldiers in that company, being gathered together, are knit together into one. That is their centre of unity; not only their having but one captain, and being engaged in one cause, and their taking one and the same oath, but having the same flag. So our great centre of unity is our Lord Jesus Christ, not only as our one captain, but as our ensign. We all profess to be one in him—O that we were so! "There is one body, and one Spirit, one

* Charles I.

hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," Eph. iv. 4, 5, &c. How many ones are there mentioned, and amongst the rest one baptism, that is, one sacramental oath; and *one Lord*, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, the uniting ensign, Some plead to have the pope the centre of unity, so that all that do not unite in him must be out of the way of salvation. Others are for episcopacy and the common prayer. As heretofore, one for Paul, Apollos, Cephas; but I am, said Paul, for Christ, 1 Cor. i. 12. Where it seems to me, I of Christ, are Paul's words concerning himself; owning Christ, and no creature, as his centre of unity:

(1.) Because of *v.* 13. *Is Christ divided?* As if he had said, Are there many Christs? being all one in him, why not with one another?

(2.) Because of *chap.* iii. 4. "While one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?"—where he leaves out those that say, I am of Christ, from among them that are carnal.—When I say, we ought all to unite in Christ, I mean, that all that profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, and walk answerable to that profession, ought to be thought meet for our communion in all the ordinances, without laying down other terms of our own devising, Gal. iii. 28. He united Jew and Gentile by this one ensign, Eph. ii. and it is a shame if others will not be united by him.—His prayer is, "I pray for them also, which shall believe on me,—that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one," John xvii. 20—22. And the same should be ours also.

7. He is an exalted Ensign. Ensigns used to be so, lifted up on high, to be seen afar off, and they are seen, accordingly, above the heads of all the soldiers. It is a custom also to choose the tallest, properest men to carry the colours, that they may help the more to lift them up. Now the blessed Jesus is such an ensign; lifted up three ways:

(1.) In the kind of death which he died, even the death of the cross, John xii. 32, 33. As the brazen serpent upon the pole, Numb. xxi. compare John iii. 14, 15.

(2.) In his resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of the Father. There he sits, higher by the head and shoulders than all the people, in personal excellences and perfection, Cant. v. 10.—the standard-bearer.

(3.) In the preaching of the gospel—that is the pole. The great work of ministers is to lift up Christ to people, to set him forth as the most eligible and desirable, both upon the account of what he is in himself, and what he is to poor sinners. They are the friends of the bridegroom, wooing for him, not for themselves; and will ye be won by them?

8. He is an exposed Ensign. Of all the officers and soldiers in the troop or company, he is most aimed at that carries the colours; kill him, and the flag falls; and when the flag falls they are all discouraged, and their hearts fail; therefore, "Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel." And is it not in like manner with the blessed Jesus? When he was here upon earth, what attempts were there, both by the devil and wicked men, by all means to destroy him; his person, even as soon as he was born, by Herod—afterwards, in the wilderness—afterwards, to break his neck. And at last they did prevail to get him hanged on a tree, and then they thought their work was done, but it proved otherwise. After his going to heaven, when himself was gone to heaven, what opposition was made against the spreading of his doctrine, against his disciples and followers, especially his under standard-bearers, his deputy ensigns, the preachers of the everlasting gospel. See 1 Cor. iv. 11—13. And still, even at this day, what striking at him in all his offices,—Prophet, Priest, King. Now certainly it is every one's duty to do all that ever he can towards the securing of the flag. (At Edge-hill* the king's standard was taken, and the standard-bearer killed; afterwards retaken.) Alas! what can we do? I answer, What we can in our particular place and station. We can own it as our chief interest, and act accordingly; contributing our utmost endeavours towards keeping the flag up, as Aaron and Hur supporting Moses, who held forth the rod of God, Exod. xvii.

9. He is a covering ensign. As all the soldiers are concerned in the safety of the flag, so the flag is a means of the safety of all the soldiers, Cant. ii. 4. *His banner over me was love;*—by clinging close to it unbroken, they are preserved. Our Lord Jesus is promised to his church under this notion, as a covering, Isa. iv. 5, 6; xxxii. 2. He will hide all that are his—in the hollow of his hand—under the shadow of his wings—in his secret place; to signify that he hath more ways than one of doing it.

10. He is a conquering ensign. In the account of victories always the number is given in, how many ensigns killed, how many colours taken; by that they judge. Now here is an ensign that lives for ever; a flag that cannot be taken. He always hath been, is, and will be, Jesus the conqueror. Rev. xix. 11. compare Rev. vi. 2. But what are his conquests to us? See Rom. viii. 37. We are told of a vision that Constantine had, the first Christian emperor, of a banner with a bloody cross in it, with this motto, "Conquer by this," which gave him great encouragement in his wars with heathen op-

* A. D. 1642. Oct. 23. Reliquiæ Baxterianæ, Lib. 1. Part 1. p. 43. Hume, v. 7. 310.

sers.* In our late wars, one prayed to know ich side should get the better, for on that side he uld be.

Use 1. By way of inquiry. What think ye of rist. How like ye this brave ensign? Are ye ted under it? Who are ye for?

2. By way of exhortation. Be persuaded this y to give in your names to him afresh, as your n act and deed, to be his, Ps. xx. 5. Having ne so, keep close to him.

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## SERMON XX.

### CHRIST IS OUR EXAMPLE.

JOHN xiii. 15.

*or I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.*

HERE were two great ends of the coming of our ord Jesus in the flesh.

The one, That by dying he might satisfy God's stice for our sins, and so make peace.

The other, That by living he may set before us an xample.

Particularly in this chapter we have him with a asin of water and a towel, washing and wiping his isciples' feet. If you ask, What an unbecoming thing as that, and why should he do so? himself answers i the text, *I have given you an example.* I did it to iow you, how you should stoop and condescend in fices of love one to another; *for if I, your Lord and faster, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash ne another's feet.*

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is our example.

Show, I. How we are to understand this.

II. What need we have of an example.

III. What kind of example he is.

IV. What lessons and what duty are to be learned om it.

I. How are we to understand this, our example?

When I say the Lord Jesus Christ is our example, mean three things:

1. He is the copy we are to write after; as children when they are to learn to write have copies set hem. It is not enough to tell them thus and thus you ust do, but show them how, by making the letters, nd setting them before them. So our Lord Jesus ath set us a copy; Mark how I have done, says he, nd look that ye do likewise.

2. He is the pattern or sampler we are to work y; as girls when they begin to sew have samplers; s Moses when to rear the tabernacle, had a pattern f God's own making; *See thou do every thing according to the pattern showed thee in the mount*, Exod. xxv. 9, 40. So our Lord Jesus, that we might be sure to do all things well, himself became our pattern, our sampler.

3. He is the way we are to walk in, and his are the footsteps we are to tread in, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Where he hath trod before us, there we may safely tread. There are the footsteps of the flock, Cant. i. 8. which we are to go forth by. And there are the footsteps of the shepherd of the flock, that is, Jesus Christ, which we are carefully to tread in, and as far as we tread in those footsteps, wherein he hath trod before us, we are in no danger of missing; it is when we tread in other footsteps that we go astray.

II. What need have we of an example?

We have need of an example upon two accounts; as of a righteousness for justification, a fountain for washing, a foundation to build on, a refuge to fly to; so of a copy, pattern, example, to write, to work, to walk by.

We need it—because of our own debility, and —because of our work's difficulty.

If the work to be done be difficult work, and the person to do it be weak and infirm, and unskilful, and apt to miss it, then by all means let him have an example to help him, to go before him; besides a rule, let him have an example.

Now that is our case.

Is not the work we have to do hard and difficult? A God to glorify, a soul to save, duty to be performed, temptation to be resisted, affliction to be borne, relations to be filled up;—is this easy? Is repenting work easy?

Are not we, the doers, weak and infirm, bent to backslide, unskilful in the word of righteousness, not only backward to, but awkward in, every thing that is good? And have we not then great need of an example, one to go before us, to show us how, and which way?—Our heavenly Father, who knows our frame, hath provided for us accordingly; the whole Bible is a book of rules and examples, rules in the precepts, examples in the stories; both Old Testament and New; which are all to help our infirmities, and we should make use of them accordingly. But one example there is so in a special and peculiar manner; a pattern which in a special manner we are to take heed to; and that is, the blessed Jesus, whose properties are to be shown,

III. By considering what kind of example Jesus Christ is.

1. He is a good example. There are bad examples, and good examples. Bad examples there are enow, which we must not follow; good examples but a few; yet some. Aye, but one we have, eminent above all the rest, and that is, the blessed Jesus. He was good, and he did good, and he went about doing

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* Eusebius de Vit. Const. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. v. 1. p. 263, &c. Milner's Church Hist. v. 2. p 41, 42.

good; and all to set us a copy, that we might learn both to be good, and to do good, and to go about doing good. Ps. xxxvii. 3, 27. There is the precept, —do as your master hath done before you; there is the pattern,—imitate him.

2. He is a great example. Dr. Jeremy Taylor,* who wrote the history of his life, according to the four gospels, titles his book the Great Exemplar; and certainly he was, and is so.

The examples we have of other good men, even the best of them, in comparison with him, were but little examples, small copies, but he is a copy in text letters.—The reason is, they were but little folks in comparison with him; they but candles, at best but stars, he the sun. Now as the sun exceeds and excels all other lights, so the blessed Jesus all other examples. There was never one of them all but would yield and veil bonnet to him, as John the Baptist did, John iii. 30.

3. He is a general example, the example of examples; all others learned of him, he of none.

But I mean general in two respects:

(1.) He is an example to all persons. We are all to learn of him, and to do as he did, and to walk as he walked. But will one and the same copy serve every one to write after? Yes, here is a copy that will.

But there are many of us that are in such conditions and relations as he was never in; we are women, he a man; we husbands, wives, parents, children, tradesmen, husbandmen: how can he then be a pattern to us?

I reply, Though he never was, nor could be, all and every thing of that that we are, yet, however, be we what we will, his example will reach us, if not directly; yet by consequence, as the word is a general rule.—He carried it so and so, in all that he was, in every relation, and in every condition, and by parity of reason, if we carry it in like manner in our particular conditions and relations as he did in all his, soberly, righteously, godly, it cannot but be well. He had a spouse—and see, Eph. v. 25.

But not general, it is objected, for he was not an example to Old-Testament people.

Very true, and therein we have the pre-eminence; yea, and all now have it not—but he is *general* to *us*.

(2.) He is an example in all things. Other good men are patterns of good, one in one thing, another in another. Abraham in believing, Job in patience, Moses in meekness; but no one in every thing: Jesus Christ only is such. "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," Rom. xiii. 13, 14. It should be—and put on sobriety, chastity, charity; no, *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, which includes all.

4. He is a public, evident example; set forth to be seen of all. Not a candle lighted and put under the bed, or under a bushel, but upon the table, in a candlestick. Many godly people, men and women, live and die in obscurity; some are published, as in Clarke's Lives. We have the story of what he did written at large in the Bible, and of the two we might better spare all the rest of the stories of Scripture than the one story of the life and death of Jesus Christ, because he is our great exemplar. Lose him and we lose all; therefore, I beseech you, prize that part of your Bible, in a special manner, that tells you what Christ did, and how he carried it.

We have ministers also, who upon all occasions either do, or should, explain the great example to us; showing us what he did, and how he carried it, to the end we may receive instruction by it.

5. He is a plain, easy example. There is a great deal of difference in writing between one hand and another. Some hands are so full of cuts and flourishes, that it is hard for a learner to learn to write after them. Others again so plain, and easy, and free from such appurtenances, that there is little difficulty in copying them.—Now such a hand was that that Jesus Christ wrote, I mean, such a copy, such an example. The condition he put on was a mean, plain condition; a servant, not a knight, or a lord, or a prince. Now as his condition was, such his example was. He set a copy for poor people to write after; the meanest cannot say, it is out of my reach, Matt. xi. 29. Learn of me—What to do? to make the world, to raise the dead, rebuke the winds and waves? No: to be *meek and lowly*; as here, to wash one another's feet: not to build churches, or erect hospitals; not to fast forty days and forty nights, not to go barefoot on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, not to wallow naked in the snow, as Saint Francis.†

6. He is a perfect, exact example, a copy without a blot: there never was any other so but himself only; all the rest missed it in one kind or other, nay, missed it in that very thing wherein they were most exemplary,—Abraham in unbelief, Job in impatience, Moses in passion, Peter in cowardice. The reason was, though they were good men, yet they were men compassed with infirmity, but here is one who had no infirmity, Heb. vii. 28. He was holy, harmless. See his challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" John viii. 46. O how well is it for us, and what cause have we to be thankful, that we have one sinless, spotless example, one that we can safely trust in and follow without fear of erring!

7. He is a purposely designed example. Designed by *God the Father* from all eternity to be so, and that was one reason why the contrivance was

* Bishop of Down and Connor. He died, A. D. 1667.

† The founder of the order of Monks called Franciscan. He died A. D. 1226. Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. v. 3. 56, &c.

that he should be a man like one of us; not only that in his death he might be a propitiation, the same nature that sinned satisfying; but also, that in his life he might be a pattern; a man to men. Designed *by himself* all along, in all that he said or did; he spake so and acted so that he might—Matt. iv. 19.—that is, I must be an example.

8. He is a peculiarly blessed example. I mean, blessed of God for good to those that apply themselves to work and walk according to it. There is a blessing that attends endeavours in reference to other good examples that are before us, but especially this. And many a poor soul hath found it so of a truth, found strength coming in from the Spirit of God, enabling him to do that in pursuing the example of the blessed Jesus, which otherwise he could not have done. "Wherefore seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud"—smoothing the way,—"of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

9. He is a perpetually abiding example, Heb. xiii. 8. Other copies of good men are worn out with time; we know little of them now, except some few Scripture patterns. But here is one that will last to the world's end, Matt. xx. 20. *I am with you*—as a copy for you to write after, as well as to support and bless you.

IV. What is to be learnt from this subject?

1. Then, hence we learn who is a true Christian.

There are Christians in name, such we all are, and there are Christians in reality. Who are they? Those that walk as Christ walked; that make him their pattern and sampler; that can say with Paul, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Phil. i. 21. A Christian! and not conform to Christ, to his image, to live as he lived? It is a contradiction. As for a man to call himself a Lutheran, a Calvinist, and not hold with Luther, or Calvin;—an Aristotelian, a Pythagorean, a Platonist, and yet oppose their schemes. It is our badge as Christ's sheep to follow him; "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

2. We learn who are the best Christians amongst Christians.

It is certain some are better than others. Now, who are the best? I answer, they who walk most like Jesus Christ, that tread most closely in his steps: allusion to 2 Kings xiv. 3. "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did." David was the sampler, the standard,—so is the Son of David.

3. Learn how far we are to follow all other examples, how good, how great soever;—no further than they follow Christ's example; when they leave him, we must leave them, 1 Cor. xi. 1. The reason is, he is the great exemplar, the pattern of patterns, Heb. xii. 1, 2. In sitting at the sacrament they are on a safer side than those that kneel, because Christ sat;—though that does not prove we must, it proves we may.

4. Then let us in every thing set ourselves to do as he hath done before us, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked;" 1 John ii. 6. *ought*—not may, if he will, or may choose, but *ought*.—It is duty. Think you hear him say, *Learn of me*, or as Gideon, "Look on me, and do likewise," Judg. vii. 17. Who should children learn of but their father? servants, but their master? Who should sheep follow but their shepherd? It were a good thought in a doubtful matter, What would Jesus Christ do if he were here? how would he carry it? Would he play at dice or cards, revel, be wanton?

Wherein especially are we to imitate the holy Redeemer?

(1.) In his care to please God in every thing, John viii. 29. Did he so? then let us endeavour the same, Acts ix. 6.

(2.) In his contempt of this world, and every thing in it. What poor nothings were they to him. Are they so to us,—riches, honours, pleasures?

(3.) In his charity towards all men. He had a love of pity and compassion towards enemies, prayed for them; so should we. But his special love was for the excellent; so should ours be, Eph. v. 2.

(4.) In his carriage under his sufferings and at his death, so meek, so lamb-like, so silent, so submissive—such should ours be.

But is it possible we should be as he was, and do as he did?

I reply, It is not in the same degree, but yet as a child learning to write strives, and doth as well as he can, and eyes his copy often, we may do.

There are two motives to such endeavours.

It will be an evidence that we are his now in the kingdom of grace. And,

It will be an earnest that we shall follow him hereafter in the kingdom of glory, Rev. xiv. 4, 5.

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## SERMON XXI.

### CHRIST IS THE DOOR.

JOHN x. 9.

*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.*

OF all the comparisons made use of by our Lord Jesus to illustrate and set forth what he is appointed of God to be to true believers, there is none more seemingly uncouth and unlikely, and yet none wherein he is more express and positive, than this, of a

*door,—I am the door.* He says elsewhere, *I am the way*, and *I am the vine*; and here, *I am the door.*

Doct. That Jesus Christ is *the door.*

Show, I. Of what use a door is, that we may see and be convinced that we have need of him, as a door.

II. What are the properties of Christ as a door, and what kind of door he is.

III. What improvement is to be made of it.

Lord, give me a door of utterance, and the people, while I am speaking, a door of entrance. Amen.

I. Of what use is a door, and how is Jesus useful as such?

A door we all know is of a four-fold use, or for four purposes—to let out, and let in; to shut out, and to shut in; and so is Jesus Christ, and therefore it is not amiss here that he says, *I am the door.*

1. A door is to let those out of the house that are in it, and have a desire or occasion to go out. It is not to break the walls down, nor to creep out by the window. No, the door is made for the purpose of orderly going out.

Now there are four houses or places which it concerns us all to get out of, and the Lord Jesus Christ is the door by which we must get out if ever we mean to get out.

(1.) There is the prison house of a sinful state and condition. In this we all are by nature, one as well as another, Gal. iii. 22.—shut up under lock and key, as prisoners are shut up, either for debt, or as malefactors.

In this prison there are two rooms, one is God's, and the other is the devil's.

*God's room in this prison*, is that in which we are all shut up by reason of the guilt of sin, according to his law, exposing us to wrath and punishment. Consider sin as a debt; we are prisoners for that debt; as a fault, a trespass, a treason. We are prisoners for it, I say, prisoners already, though suffered to walk up and down, yet prisoners—bound over. There is a worse prison to come, but this is the way to it, the beginning of sorrows. Now is there never a door out of this prison, no way to pay the debt, to make satisfaction to divine justice, that we may be discharged? Yes there is, and Christ is that door; Whosoever believes in him, shall not come into condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Thus it is prophesied of him, Isa. lxi. 1. "He hath sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." By him many a poor prisoner hath been set free, Ps. cxvi. 16. 1 Tim. i. 13—15. Methinks we should all be glad of this, both those that are out, and those that may get out if they will. Were such an offer made to the poor prisoners in Chester, or Shrewsbury, or Ludgate, or Newgate, the debtors' end, or the malefactors' end, how welcome would it be!

*The devil's room in this prison*, is that in which all unconverted sinners are; under the dominion of sin, under the power of a corrupt nature; led captive by him, 2 Tim. ii. 26. Like Samson with his eyes out, grinding in the Philistines' mill, and the Philistines making sport with him. Here is the truth of thy condition, sinner. "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," 2 Cor. iv. 4. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Eph. ii. 2, 3. Now is there no door out? Must I live and die in this condition? Is there no escaping? Yes: there is a door; he is raised up, and sent of God, on purpose to be the deliverer; as Moses out of Egypt, Cyrus out of Babylon. Dost thou not hear him call? Thou hast heard it many a time, but not heeded it. O heed it this day, and close with it; say not, I like my master, and I will not go free, but yield thyself unto God, as one that is alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. Rom. vi. 13.

(2.) There is the house of bondage under the ceremonial law; an uncomfortable house to dwell in; the fathers thought it so; a yoke, an intolerable yoke. But is there no door? Yes, Jesus Chirst is the door: by him the gospel church is called to go out, from bondage to freedom, from carnal to spiritual ordinances, Matt. xi. 28. And yet there are some that will not stir, nay, are angry with those that do, and hate and persecute them; as Ishmael the son of the bond-woman, did Isaac, the son of the free-woman, Gal. iv.

(3.) There is the house of correction under afflicting providences. And this is a house that few of us but one time or other are taking a turn in it, and glad would we be to get out;—the sick to be well; in pain to be at ease; they that are in want to be supplied; the sad to be comforted. Some cannot abide in this house, but will break prison, use unlawful means to get out. There is but one door of lawful escape, and that is Jesus Christ: he is the door, Ps. lxviii. 20. Make him thy friend, and let him alone. How? Humble thyself to him, accept of the punishment of thy iniquity, justify God, judge thyself, bear patiently his fatherly chastisement, use lawful means, and yet be willing to continue his prisoner: and mark if this be not the right door. Murmuring, quarrelling, complaining, shifting, sharking will not do. Job xxxiii. 19; xxiii. 24, 25.—a turn-key, a door-keeper, *chap.* xxxvi. 8—12.

(4.) There is the house of the grave: a house in

which we must all make our bed shortly; a dark, silent, lonesome house, wherein there is company enough, but no converse. Is there any door out of this house? Only one comfortable door, and that is Jesus Christ. "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," John xi. 25.—the *resurrection* only to them that believe, and to all them; others must be raised, but Jesus Christ is the resurrection only to true believers. None but they must come out through him, as the door. There is *victory* only through him, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

2. A door is to let those in that are without; being open, we go in at it, and it is the right and usual way of entering. Now, such a door for such a purpose is Jesus Christ.

(1.) He is the door into the pasture. So, in the context, he compares believing souls to a flock of sheep, and himself to their shepherd. Now sheep must have some pasture, some place to graze in; that place must have some gate or door, for the sheep to go in at. I am the door, says he. What, and the shepherd too? Yes, and the shepherd too. What is the pasture then, to which he is the door? The pasture for believing souls is the word of God, the ordinances of God, preaching, praying, singing psalms, sacraments, sabbaths: here Christ feeds his flock, Cant i. 7, 8. And brave *green* pastures they are, Ps. xxiii. 2, 3. Now the door is Christ; it is by him we enter, in his name, by the assistance of his Spirit. Without him there is no blessing, no nourishment. How do the sacraments become profitable? By the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit. See then that we come in his name, and strength.

(2.) He is the door into the presence-chamber, Eph. ii. 13, 18; iii. 12. There is no coming to God with comfort, but in at this door. It was his great end in dying, that he might bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18.

(3.) He is the door into the storehouse, or treasury, of all the good things that we have need of, whether concerning this life, or the other. The door to them was shut and locked up, and barred and bolted, by the fall. There is no coming at any of them till the Son of God came, and himself became the door, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, *by Christ Jesus.*"—They are laid up in the promises; now Christ is the door to the promises, 2 Cor. i. 20. Col. i. 19. compare John i. 16.

(4.) He is the door into the school-house. The church of God in this world is like a great school, wherein all true believers are scholars, or learners. The teacher is God, John vi. 44. His ushers are the ministers, the under-teachers. The lesson is, the will of God concerning our salvation. The door or entrance into this school, is Christ; by him it is we are admitted into this privilege; he gives us the understanding, 1 John v. 20. Ps. cxix. 130. —the entrance or door.—O beg of him to help thee in at this door, to take thee under his blessed tuition.

(5.) He is the door into the ark; I mean, Noah's ark, the close ship, wherein Noah and his family were saved. It had a *door*, Gen. vi. 16. Now that door is Christ; there is no safety, no salvation, but in, and by, and through his merit, and mediation, 1 Pet. iii. 21.—he shall be saved as here.

(6.) He is the door into the atonement. It is by him that we are let into the pardon-office; into a state of peace and reconciliation with God, Rom. v. 1. 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

(7.) He is the door into grace and holiness; his blood is not justifying only, but sanctifying. It is by him that we are made new creatures, partakers of the divine nature; quickened, Eph. ii. 1.

(8.) He is the door into glory and happiness. He is the door into heaven. There is no coming thither, but by him. He is our forerunner.

3. A door is to shut out those that are without, to keep people from coming in at pleasure. They must knock that will enter. Our hearts have a door, and it is shut against him, and he is fain to knock, and call, Ps. xxiv. 7, 9. Cant. v. 2. Rev. iii. 20. These houses of his afore-mentioned have a door also, and they are kept by that door from being common. But if we knock, it shall be opened, Matt. vii. 7, 8. Provided we knock in time, else the door will be shut, Matt. xxv. 10, 11. Luke xiii. 26—28. And provided also we knock in earnest, Luke xiii. 24. not coldly, carelessly; not in guile and hypocrisy.

4. A door is to shut those in that are within. All that are let in by Christ into those blessed rooms before mentioned, let him alone to secure them there. John x. 28. 1 Pet. i. 5. When Noah was in the ark, God shut him in.

II. What are the properties of Christ as a door?

As a door he hath these properties.

1. He is a living door. This is peculiar to him. No other door is so besides him; as he is the *living way*, Heb. x. so he is the living door. The door to life, and a door that hath life. Other doors are dead things. Now, it is true he was dead, but he is alive, and lives for evermore, and thence it follows, Rev. i. 18. *and have the keys of hell and of death.*

2. He is a low door. They that will enter in by him must stoop, or else there is no entering. It was man's pride, lifting up himself against God, that shut up the old door; therefore it is humility, and humiliation, and self-denial, that must help us in at this new door, Luke ix. 23.

3. He is a strait door, Matt. vii. 14. As we must stoop, so we must strip; there is no taking our lusts and sins in with us at this door. Away with them, allude to Mark x. 50. He, casting away his garments, rose, and came to Jesus. See Matt. xix. 23,

24. A cable untwisted may, in time, be gotten through a needle's eye, but not else.

4. He is a strong door. The door into the temple was so, when twenty men were employed night and morning to shut and open it. We read of brazen gates. Such a gate Christ is, and it was needful he should be so,

*For comfort to his people.* Therefore he is able to save to the uttermost; therefore there is no danger of being broken open, or plucked out. And,

*For terror to others.* Therefore no breaking in upon him, otherwise than upon his own terms.

5. He is an open door. As yet I may say so in the sense in which he is an open fountain, Zech. xiii. 1. free to all, Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. He excludes none from coming in at this door, that do not exclude themselves.

6. He is the only door. Besides him there is no other. I am the door, *that* door, that one only door, Acts iv. 12. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Our own merit and righteousness is no door; therefore said Paul, What things were gain to me, them I counted loss for Christ: yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord," Phil. iii. 7, 8.

The mediation of saints and angels is not. They themselves have need of Christ to be their door.

General mercy is not; it never yet pardoned one sin, nor saved one soul, but in and by Jesus Christ.

Ministers are not, nor ordinances.

III. What improvement is to be made of this subject.

1. What cause have we to bless God that there is such a door, especially that in love to our souls he hath revealed it to us. Yet, more especially, that he hath helped us in by it; that it is shut upon us for our security, and not against us for our exclusion.

2. What a condition are they in that are either in darkness, or blindness, knowing nothing of this door, like the Sodomites, Gen. xviii. Or, that are shutting it against themselves by unbelief; or that are knocking at other wrong doors, like the priests of Baal, 1 Kings xviii.

3. Of what concernment is it to us, every one of us, both to own Jesus Christ as the only door, and to get in by him, and to do it quickly, before the door be shut.

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## SERMON XXII.

### CHRIST IS AS THE DEW.

HOSEA xiv. 5.

*I will be as the dew unto Israel.*

THESE words are a gracious promise made to Israel by the God of Israel, wherein the thing promised is, that he will be *as the dew* to them. You know what the dew is. It is a moisture distilled from heaven upon the earth, in a summer's morning, whereby the earth is refreshed in a dry season, and the grass and the corn, and the herbs are refreshed, and made to grow. Now to this little inconsiderable thing the Lord doth here compare himself, that is, God in Christ, for out of Christ God is not a dew to us, but a consuming fire; and, therefore, I say in Christ and therefore to him I shall apply it.

DOCT. That the Lord Jesus Christ is as the dew unto his Israel.

This comparison of the dew is made use of for illustration in sundry places of Scripture.

The inconstant goodness of an hypocrite or dissembler in religion, is compared to the *morning cloud* and the *early dew*, Hos. vi. 4. The morning cloud promising rain, the early dew performing something towards it, but nothing to purpose; as good never a whit as never the better. So in the case of the hypocrite.

The multitudes of sincere converts that should be, and were, in the days of the gospel, especially at the first setting of it out, are compared to the multitude of the drops of dew in a morning, Ps. cx. 3. *the dew of thy youth*, that is, multitudes of young converts.

The benefits that the world hath from the presence of good people in it, especially when they are much made of; they are like the dew to the places where they live, Micah v. 7.

The excellency of brotherly love and unity, and unanimity among brethren, is like the dew, Ps. cxxxiii. 1, 3. It makes every thing to grow, and flourish, and prosper.

The word of God, especially the word of the gospel, is like dew, Deut. xxxii. 2. Isa. lv. 10, 11. Heb. vi. 7, 8.

Here the Lord himself says, *I* will be as *the dew* to Israel.

Show, I. What likeness there is between Jesus Christ and the dew.

II. Who the *Israel* is to whom he will be as the dew.

III. When especially it is that we have need of this dew.

IV. What our duty is in reference to it.

I. What likeness is there between Jesus Christ and the dew?

The dew hath six properties, all fitly applicable, without straining, to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The dew is divine and heaven-born. It is not of the earth earthy, but of heaven heavenly. God himself is the *Father* of it, not man, Job xxxviii. 28. It is often called *the dew of heaven*, Gen. xxvii. 28, 39. Dan iv. 15; xxxiii. 5. 21. And is not Christ so? Is not God his Father? Was he not begotten of him before all worlds? Isa. liii. 1. *Who shall declare his generation?* He is the dew certainly, for he came from heaven; he is the *gift* of God.

2. The dew descends, comes down. The motion of the sun is circular,* in a round, from east to west; but the motion of the dew and the rain is perpendicular, in a direct line downwards; and both for the good of man. Jesus Christ descended: he ascended, it is true, but first he descended into the lower parts of the earth, Eph. iv. 9. And it was a descent indeed, if ever there was any,—from the right hand of the Majesty of heaven to be born of a poor woman, in a stable, laid in a manger; to condescend to be made man was much, but to be made sin, a curse, was much more.

3. The manner of the descending of the dew is observable; it descends silently, makes no noise, as the rain oftentimes doth, clattering upon the houses. Such was the coming of this dew, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world; he came not *with observation*, Luke xvii. 20. *with outward* show, did not cry, Matt. xii. 19.—not after the manner of kings and great men, sending harbingers before them. When he comes upon the soul, either in a way of sanctification, or of consolation, it is silently; there is no noise;—the friend that sits on the same seat knows nothing of it, scarce the soul itself at present, Cant. vi. 12.

4. It is the nature of the dew to soften as far as it goes. So doth Jesus Christ: he finds the heart hard, incapable of divine impressions, but he doth not leave it so. He turns the stone into flesh. That is more than dew ever did, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. By this we may know hath this dew ever descended upon our souls. What softness, pliableness, tractableness to the will of God, under ordinances, under providences, is there!

5. The dew moistens. So doth Christ. The heart, through sin, is not hard only, but dry, till grace comes, and that opens a spring, which spring springs up in the soul to everlasting life; then there is weeping and mourning for sin; our own sins, Zech. xii. 10. and other men's sins, Ps. cxix. 136. Ahab's repentance was in some things beyond Josiah's, but Josiah wept; so did not Ahab; compare 1 Kings xxi. 27. with 2 Kings xxii. 19. It is said of Gideon's fleece, it was wet with dew when all was dry round about it, Judg. vi. 37. So it is oftentimes with souls in ordinances, under providences.

6. The dew makes fruitful; the grass, and the corn, and the herbs, and plants in the garden, and in the field, grow the better after the early dew: it is refreshing to them, and causes them to thrive and shoot forth, Gen. ii. 4—6. Says Elijah, when he would foretell a famine, as the means of it, "There shall not be dew these years." Says David, in his elegy upon the death of Jonathan, when he would wish the mountains where he died barren, *Let there be no dew*, 2 Sam. i. 21.

The author of all the fruitfulness of souls is the blessed Jesus, by the working of his Spirit and grace. Isa. xliv. 4. See what follows here, *He shall grow*, that is, with all kinds of growth; downwards, upwards; in strength, comfort, usefulness. Hos. xiv. 8. "From me is thy fruit found." See John xv. 1—5. Mal. iv. 2. As a sun he furthers fruitfulness and growth: "*grow as calves of the stall.*"

II. Who is the Israel to whom he will be as the dew.

There is a two-fold Israel spoken of.

*Israel the person.* That was Jacob; so called from his prevailing with God in his wrestling. Of him it is not meant. He was dead and gone long before. And,

*Israel the people.* This is two-fold:

Israel *according to the flesh.* The nation and the people of the Jews; the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was a truth with reference to them, The Lord was unto them as the dew,—refreshing, cheering, comforting, making them to grow, and increase wonderfully. And,

Israel *according to the spirit.* All truly penitent believing people, whether under the Old Testament, or under the New. Such as are described doing according to rules given, Hos. xiv. 1—4. To such as these Christ is as the dew. It is true he must descend on us, ere we can be such, but when his grace hath made us such, then he is indeed the dew unto us. Now when it is said here, "I will be as the dew unto Israel," understand it,

1. Of the gospel church in general; and the particular churches and congregations, the visible members of it. The Lord Jesus hath been, is, and will be, as the dew to them; making them to grow, and thrive, and increase, and bring forth.

2. Of particular believing souls. Such as are Israelites indeed, princes with God; called, and chosen, and faithful. They will all witness for him —I am sure I have found him as the dew to me many a time; And so have I, will another say.

III. When especially have we need of this dew?

1. To be sure we have all need of it while we are in an unconverted state and condition. Till a shower of this dew falls upon thee, thou art good for nothing. God hath no service, no fruit, from thee. Thou art like the mountains of Gilboa, under God's wrath and curse. O that thou wert made sensible of it, that thy soul might be like the dry and thirsty ground, that gapes for the dew and for the rain; that thou wert set a longing after it; crying and calling for it.

2. When the conscience is parched at any time with the sense of guilt staring thee in the face, through some wilful omission, or commission. O then for a shower of this dew! What is there else that can give ease and comfort, but only this? 1 John

* That is, *apparently* so, except upon its own axis. It is now pretty generally agreed that the earth and other planets move around the sun.

i. 7; ii. 1, 2. Rom. v. 1. He alone is our city of refuge, the altar we must fly to.

3. Under the withdrawings of the light of God's countenance. When he is pleased to hide his face from the soul, whether provoked to it, or for trial, when mourning all the day long, this alone must be the dew that must refresh and comfort, Prov. xiv. 12. A beam of that favour shining upon the soul through Jesus Christ.

4. When a fit of barrenness prevails; through the stirrings of some corruption, the success of some temptation, or through the want of quickening means and ordinances, the word, sacraments, sabbaths, solemn assemblies. What hath the soul to recover itself by out of this ill frame? Nothing but a shower of this dew. When he that hath said here, "I will be as the dew unto Israel," comes by his Holy Spirit, puts in his hand by the hole of the door, speaks life and quickening to the soul, that makes a speedy change, as Cant. v. 2, 4, &c.

5. In a time of outward trouble and calamity; when creature comforts fail, relations are unkind, or, it may be, snatched away; when losses and crosses betide us, and our life is made uncomfortable to us; —O the help that is had then, at such a time and in such a case, from a shower of this dew! To be able to say, My Christ is mine still, and I am his. I have my fountain though my cisterns be all drawn dry, Hab. iii. 17, 18. As David, 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

6. When we come to die. The valley of the shadow of death is a very low place, so low that it is oftentimes very dark and uncomfortable to those that walk in it; but if the Lord Jesus be with us in that valley we need not fear, Ps. xxiii. 4. One shower of the dews of his refreshing, comforting Spirit, whispering peace, enabling us to look beyond, will make death to be quite another thing, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

7. When we go to an ordinance. The dew is necessary to prepare the ground for the plough.

8. When we have been at an ordinance. It is needful to close the soil with the seed.

IV. What is our duty in reference to this?

1. Mix faith with it, as a divine truth; that there is certainly such a thing as this dew; and that the Lord Jesus Christ is it. We see and feel the other dew, and know by experience what it is, but this is spiritual and invisible; yet it is as real a thing as the other.

2. Be more and more sensible of your need of it every day, in every thing; to soften, to moisten, to make fruitful. All is nothing without it. Nothing else will do the work but it only, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

3. Ask it of God; and having asked it, expect and wait for it, in the use of appointed means. "Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain," Zech. x. 1. Say, "Lord, I want a shower of dew for my soul: my plants, my graces, my comforts, wither and decline; my fruit fails; help, Lord!"—And for means, the ordinances are the way.—We must lie by the pool-side. Though they can do nothing without him, though he can refresh without them, yet his ordinary way is in and by them. Wait as the husbandman. Jam. v. 7. allude to 1 Kings xviii. 4.

But I can do nothing, says one, I am unworthy.

What doth the ground do to invite the dew? It thirsts, and desires, and gapes, that is all. What worthiness is there in the earth to deserve such refreshments from heaven? None at all; the manna, that is, Christ, came down in the dew—in the ordinances, to be gathered only in the morning. Look to it you that are young, it is the *early* dew; it is dried up at noon; there are no showers of it then; therefore, "Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth."

4. Observe whence all your spiritual refreshments come, and all your fruit. It is from Christ as your dew; and let him have the glory of it, Ps. cxv. 1. 1 Tim. i. 12.

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## SERMON XXIII.

### CHRIST IS OUR SUN.

MAL. iv. 2.

*But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings: and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.*

THIS sun here spoken of is certainly our Lord Jesus Christ. It must be he. It can be no other.

He is *the Sun of righteousness*. That is

He is most righteous in himself; holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, as the Branch of righteousness, Jer. xxxiii. 15. Righteous as God, righteous as man, *Jesus Christ the righteous*. So he is called, 1 John ii. 1. He is a Sun for righteousness, transcending all other. Besides,

He is *made righteousness to us*, 1 Cor. i. 30. The *Lord* Jehovah, *our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. So that if ye have any thing to do at any time with the righteous God, any sin to get pardoned, service accepted, and are sensible ye have no righteousness of your own, take his, and go in his name, and your work is done.

He is also a *rising* sun. There is a two-fold rising of this sun;

The one general and universal to all the world: at his incarnation, when the day-star, that is, the sun, from on high, visited us, Luke i. 78.

The other particular and personal, in our horizon, and that is, when we are savingly converted. Then he rises, and never till then, to our souls; *to you that fear my name*. Not that we fear first, and then

he Sun rises. No, the *sun* rises first, and puts that ear into your hearts, that is, that repentance, faith, ew nature, and then he rises in us, and on us, more nd more. Now, the query is, what the soul gets by the ising of this sun. What doth the world get, what lo particular creatures get, by the rising of the sun n the firmament every day? I answer, six things—ight—life—heat—healing—furtherance in growth—nd furtherance in fruitfulness.—So do the souls of rue believers, by the rising of Jesus Christ, the Sun f righteousness, on them; every day they get spiriual light, life; and, therefore, if ye ask what kind f Sun Christ is, and what are his properties as such, answer, He is an enlightening, enlivening, heating, ealing sun, furthering our growth—and our fruitulness. Of the two first we have discoursed before —as our *light and life*.* Of the four last this day.

Jesus Christ is made unto us of God, a soul-heatng, soul-warming sun. What heat, what warmth is here in the beams of the sun in the firmament, in a ummer's day! how extensive! There is nothing hid rom the heat thereof, Ps. xix. 6. Nay, if it be in the nidst of the winter, though, by reason of its distance rom us, the rays are weak, and want force, yet how omfortable is it to us, how refreshing, how glad are ve of it! And hath Jesus Christ never been in like nanner warming, refreshing, comforting to your ouls? Have ye never found him a heating sun to you? t is true, there are places where the heat of the sun s such, as not only blackens, but burns. And there re people too, to whom Jesus Christ is a burning, onsuming sun; that is, to all the impenitent, unelieving opposers of his kingdom and gospel, to ll that go on still in their wickedness. See in the rst of the chapter, a very terrible threatening,—"All he proud, yea, all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: nd the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith he Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither oot nor branch." But it follows,—"Unto you hat fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness rise with healing in his wings,"—as if he had said —Be not ye afraid; he that will be a lion to others, will be a lamb to you—an oven to others, a sun to ou.

Show, I. What need we have of these warming nfluences from Christ the Sun of righteousness. And,

II. How and in what way Christ the Sun of righteousness, communicates heat and warmth to those hat fear his name.

I. What need have we of these warming influnces from Christ the Sun of righteousness?

The need we have is, upon the account of the oldness we are subject to, in spiritual things.

Some are key-cold, stone-cold; they have no eat, no warmth at all. How should they? They are dead, dead in trespasses and sins, altogether void of spiritual life; and that was once the case of every one of us, and is still the case of every unconverted, unregenerate soul. Till Christ arise upon us, and give us life, we are dead, Eph. ii. 1. When life comes, heat comes.

Even the best, such as are spiritually alive, are subject to their cold fits. The sense and feeling of which, and complaining under it, is a sign there is life, and that it is not the cold of death. Living people are cold, as perhaps some of you are now at this time, while I am speaking,† and dead people are cold; but there is this difference, the dead are always so; they feel nothing from it.

The causes of this spiritual coldness are,

1. Some inward distemper prevailing in the soul; some mortified lust striving, which drinks up the spirits. There are spiritual ague-fits, strokes of palsy. The more of the stone in the heart, and the earth in the mind, the cooler it becomes.

2. From the season; night-time and winter-time are cooling times. When God withdraws, it is both night and winter with the soul; and no marvel then if it be cold.

3. From cooling circumstances, such as want of ordinances, engagement with carnal relations. See both in Ps. cxx. 5. "Woe is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" As if he had said—Alas! how cold am I!

The effects of spiritual coldness are,

1. Inward uneasiness. Warmth is comfortable; cold is uncomfortable. When this sun was eclipsed and gone, how sad were the disciples!

2. Unfitness for action. When numbness seizes the joints, the man can do nothing, Job xxxvii. 7. "He sealeth up the hand of every man." Wonder not if he cannot work.

3. Unaptness to receive impressions by the word and by the rod—as wax when hard and cold. Inquire,

II. How is heat and warmth communicated by Christ to those that fear his name?

In general—it is by his *wings*. The sun, say you, hath no wings. It means his beams. In allusion to the fowls, who not only fly with their wings, but warm and shelter their young with their wings, Matt. xxiii. 37. But,

1. In particular—he is a *warming* Sun to us.

(1.) He is so by the immediate motions and comforts of his holy Spirit. It is under that notion that he is promised as a *Comforter*, John xiv. 16. Comfort is warming. Also he is promised as fire, Matt. iii. 11. When he sanctifies, he works as fire, which is cleansing; also when he comforts. And,

(2.) He is so by his word and ordinances, though not without the Spirit. They are dead things in

* See Discourses IX and X.

† January, 1691-2.

themselves; it is the Spirit only that quickens; but the effect is produced when he is pleased to work with them and by them.

The word of Christ hath a warming faculty, Jer. xxiii. 29. Luke xxiv. 32. Have not you yourselves found it so many a time? When you have come cold to it, benumbed, frozen, how strangely, how suddenly, have you been altered, revived, quickened, comforted!

The sacrament of the Lord's supper is a warming, quickening, comforting ordinance,—as food, as physic, a cordial. Allude to 1 Sam. xxx. 11, 12.

Singing of psalms is another warming ordinance, Eph. v. 18, 19. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

(3.) He is so, by good society. The very sight of a good man warms, much more converse with him; and the more inward and intimate the better, Eccl. iv. 11. Not only bad company, but the want of good company, is cooling. Fire is quenched as well by the withdrawing of fuel as by pouring on water. See Acts ii. 41—47.

May I be bold to ask you, How is it with you? What temper are you in? Are you cold? What kind of cold is it—the cold of the living, or the cold of the dead?

My exhortation to you in both cases must be one and the same: Away to Christ the Sun of righteousness. Lay thy soul under his wings, his warm beams, the influences of his Spirit and grace, his word and ordinances.

Beg of him to come and warm thee by them. This is the meaning of David's oft-repeated request, Ps. cxix. for quickening,—quickening.

Prayers must be seconded with endeavours. Motion begets heat; so does meditation: "While I was musing the fire burned."

When you meet with spiritual warmth at any time, let the Sun of righteousness have the praise. We may lay ourselves under his warming beams; but what do we towards our own warming? Some ministers, some subjects, are more warming than others; but we must use all the means, and that diligently.

2. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God a heavenly sun, *with healing* in his wings. Our condition is oftentimes not only a cold, starved condition, but a sick and wounded condition. We are sick—of the disease of natural corruption. We are sick—of the wounds of actual sin.

We should be greatly concerned, each of us, about these two. If any thing ails the body, if that be sick, if that be sore, we send hither and send thither, far and near, for help. What! and no concernedness for the poor soul? We should in this case be more concerned, much more; for the soul is more precious than the body; one soul is of more value than a thousand bodies. The soul is the man. If the body be sick and die, it is *but* the body, the soul may do well enough; but if the *soul* be sick and die, the man is lost. The body may perish alone, but the soul never perishes without the body also perishing with it.

Count upon it, each of you, you have need of healing. If you think not so, you have most need of all, Matt. ix. 12. Have you not a corrupt nature? Why, that itself is a disease. Are ye not daily trespassing and transgressing? Your backslidings must be healed, or ye are undone.

Behold I bring you tidings of great joy. There is healing, there is a healer. The Sun of righteousness is risen. Away to him then with all thy sores, with all thy sicknesses.

He cures of the disease of corrupted nature by his renewing grace. When the Spirit sanctifies, he heals. O beg that Spirit of his! Ps. li. 10.

He cures of the wounds of actual sin by his blood and merit; as a Sun of righteousness imputing righteousness to us before God, wherein we are made to be accepted. This justifies, acquits, absolves, and so heals. See both together, Ps. ciii. 3.

Consider, (1.) The healing that is with Christ the Sun of righteousness, is the alone healing. There is no other that can cure thee, Acts iv. 12. Whether it be true that the king's evil can be cured by the king's touch * only, is more than I know; but I am sure the evil of sin can be cured no other way than by the touch of the King of kings.—All other physic and physicians are of no value.

(2.) It is all-healing. There is no disease, no wound, that he cannot cure. Among diseases those that are hereditary are hardest cured. Now sin is such; but though it be so, he can cure it. Among wounds those that have been longest neglected are hardest cured. Are thine such? Say not there is no hope. David lay three quarters of a year under the peril of a neglected wound, yet he did well. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John i. 7. As when here on earth no disease was able to stand before him, so it is now. The diseases of the soul submit to his healing touch.

(3.) It is healing at hand. What is there nearer at hand to us, wherever we are, than the sun-beams? Would they afford a remedy for all sores and sicknesses, who would want it? Lo, here is a sun that

* "We now without the smallest danger of incurring the suspicion of disloyalty, can safely pronounce that the royal touch for the king's evil, is to be referred to the head of physical charms, evincing that no order of men escaped the ancient contagion of superstition." Brand's Observations on Popular Antiquities. v. p. 509. An account of the ceremony may be seen in the Gent. Mag. v. xxi. p. 415.

vill heal thy soul; and how near is it! Away then, ach of you, with all the speed imaginable, to this ıealer. Delays are dangerous. David complains, Ps. xxxviii. 5. "My wounds stink and are corrupt ıecause of my foolishness."

3. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God a growth-urthering sun; *they shall go forth and grow up as alves of the stall.*

*Go forth*—as a sick man when healed goes forth; valks abroad, after long keeping his bed or cham-ıer; abroad into the open air, which is refreshing, ınd comfortable; abroad, about his occasions. So he soul, when cured of sin by the Sun of righteous-ıess, then, and not till then, goes forth; that is, begins o live, to live to purpose, to the will and glory of God, o his own happiness and salvation, Ps. cxvi. 16.

*And grow up.*—Oftentimes after a fit of sickness, when cured, children are observed to grow and shoot 'orth exceedingly. So it is with the soul, and it is ›wing to the sun's wings or beams. Nobody doubts he influence the sun hath upon the growth of trees ınd plants in winter. When the sun is away they grow not, they scarce live. So it is with trees of ighteousness, trees of the Lord's planting. All heir growth is owing to Jesus Christ.

Can a tree or plant grow without a root? No. Lo, ıe is our root.

Can a tree or plant grow without watering? Lo, he is our dew.

Can a tree or plant grow without warmth? Lo, he s a sun to us, his warm beams make us to grow, ınd nothing else will do it without him. Sometimes growth in grace is spoken of as a commanded duty, 2 Pet. iii. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 1. In the text and else-where it is spoken of as a promised mercy, Prov. iv. 18. Job xvii. 9. And the blessed Jesus is the sole ıuthor of it.

*As calves of the stall.*—It shall be a speedy, useful growth. It is true he promotes and furthers it by ıppointed means, Ps. xcii. 12, 13. But still himself s the author of it.

Let us examine how it is with us. Do we grow, grow in knowledge, grow in grace? Are we better, ›etter this year than the last, more humble, watch-'ul, tender? It should be so. Growth evidences ruth;—painted trees grow not. Many grow worse ınd worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13. Growth will appear in ıtrength, and in stedfastness.

Let me exhort and instruct you. Would you grow? Get under the wings of this sun. "Grow n grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Pet. iii. 18.—How in grace? By growing in the knowledge of Christ; not head-knowledge, but heart-knowledge. After so much preaching of Christ God will certainly expect you should grow apace. "Grow up into him," Eph iv. 15.—into acquaintance with him, into living upon him, especially as a Sun of righteousness healing us.



4. The same is also to be said concerning our fruit; our Lord Jesus is a fruit-furthering sun.

The summer time, when the sun is with us, is the fruit-bearing time of the year. So when Christ is near the soul, and the soul is under his influences, then it bears fruit. "I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon. From me is thy fruit found," Hos. xiv. 5—8. See John xv. 1—8. "I am the vine," &c.

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## SERMON XXIV.

### CHRIST IS OUR SHIELD.

### GENESIS XV. 1.

*After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield.*

THE word of the Lord that appeared to Abram, and said this, was the Lord, the Word, the second Person in the blessed Trinity—God the Son; our Lord Jesus Christ. He appeared often to the fathers in visions before his great appearance, when he was made flesh and dwelt among us. Now that which he said was, I am thy *shield.*

Aye thine, O Abram, says one; but what is that to us, what kin are we to Abram?

I reply, No kin at all, only he was our father; and is that nothing? It is true, we are no kin to him according to the flesh, only as he and we are come of the same Adam and Eve; but, according to the Spirit,—he is our father, and we are his children, if we are true believers. He is called the Father of the faithful, Rom. iv. All that was said to him was said to us. See chap. xvii. 7. *A God to thee, and* TO THY SEED.

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is made of God a *shield* to all true believers.

Thy shield? each faithful soul may hereupon say; *my* shield, Lord;—as David, Ps. iii. 3; xxviii. 7; cxix. 114.

Show, I. The meaning of this; what a shield is.

II. The properties of this shield; what kind of shield Jesus Christ is. And,

III. What use is to be made of it.

I. What is a shield?

A shield is the same with a buckler, a broad plate of gold, or brass, or steel, or such like, carried by soldiers in their left hand to ward off blows from the head and heart, while the right hand manages the sword. Such a thing God the Word promised Abram

here, and us in him, that he would be to him a shield, that is, a defence, a protection, a preservation to keep us from all evil, from all hurts and harms, from every thing that might annoy us.

But are we in danger? do we stand in need of such a thing?

Certainly. We do every day, and every night, every hour, and every moment.

1. We are engaged in a warfare; every Christian is to look upon himself as an enlisted soldier, and as such hath need of shield and buckler; not only of a sword for offence, but of a shield for defence.

2. Our enemies that fight against us are many, and mighty; the world, the flesh, and the devil are the three generals, and under each is Gad—behold, a troop cometh. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood," Eph. vi. 12. that is, men like ourselves, and yet among such we have enemies, and therefore as to them we have need of a shield. *After these things*, after the war of four kings with five, after Abram had rescued Lot, and made them all his enemies, no doubt he was afraid. Now the Lord Jesus comes to him, *Fear not*, they shall none of them hurt thee. I will stand between thee and danger. Nay we have another enemy, I had like to have said, worse than all the rest, considered as an enemy, and that is God, the mighty and terrible God: a professed enemy to every wicked man, going on still in his trespasses. If thou have not a shield to defend thee from him, from the stroke of his offended justice, thou art undone. Now that shield is our Lord Jesus Christ; not only to defend us from men and devils, but from being hurt by God himself.

3. It concerns us to get a shield, considering what it is that is in danger; even our all; all we are, and all we have, our life, health, estate, families; nay, more than all these; our souls, our precious and immortal souls, are in danger. They are in danger of being wounded, of being destroyed. Their purity, their peace, is in danger. O then see, see, I beseech you, the daily need you are in of some shield, nay, any shield will not serve—of *this* shield.

II. What are the properties of this shield?

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is a living shield. Other shields are dead things, made of dead materials; but he lives, and lives for ever. He was dead, it is true, but he is alive again, and lives for evermore.

2. He is a lasting shield. Other shields are subject to be worn out in process of time with much using, and then new ones must be had. Solomon made golden ones. In his son's days, they were gone, and brazen ones made in the stead of them; but here is a shield the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; Heb. xiii. 8. It is a long time since Abram and David had him for a shield, yet he is as firm and good now as ever, as safe and as sure.

3. He is an encompassing shield. Other shields are for one side only, but here is a shield for every side—right side, left side, inside, outside, Ps. v. 12. It is said concerning Job, and though the devil said it he said truth, "Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side," Job i. 10.—a hedge about, and about, and round about, never a gap in it.—Were there one open place, at that one evil might come in.

4. He is an impenetrable shield, such a shield as cannot be pierced through. We are told of a buckler, or shield, that was seven-fold, the thickness of seven ox-hides. What sword, or spear, or dart, could pierce that shield? Lo, here is one beyond that, armour of proof, such a shield as nothing can prevail against, nothing can enter. Is it a thing possible to prevail by power against omnipotency?

5. He is the alone shield, besides him there is no other. Solomon, and the rest of the kings, had choice; if one failed, they had another—for variety. But this never fails: there is no need of any other; it alone is sufficient. Other shields are shields of no value, such as cannot do our business, neither of one kind nor other; none but Christ, none but Christ.

Are not, it is asked, magistrates shields? Ps. xlvii. 9.

They are sub-shields, under-shields; he alone is the chief shield. They can do nothing without him; he can do what he pleases without them. But.

Is not faith a shield? Eph. vi. 16. "Taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

It is not faith that quenches in itself, and of itself, but as it receives Christ, and holds up Christ. Every shield must have a hand to hold it, so must this shield. Now that hand is faith;—not love, not repentance, not patience; but faith.

6. He is an all-sufficient shield.

He is a shield to all them that *put their trust in him*. If there were more such than there are, he would be enough for each of them; but not to others. Prov. xxx. 5. Ps. xxxi. 19. It concerns every one then to make sure his interest in Christ. If Christless, shieldless.

He is so at all times, and in all cases; against all enemies, bodily, ghostly; in all perils and dangers, to the inward, to the outward man, Gen. xvii. 1 Being God all-sufficient, he is shield all-sufficient.

III. What use are we to make of this?

1. This is a very comfortable truth to all the Lord's people—that Jesus Christ is a sun to enlighten and warm us, that he is a shield also to protect and defend us. Let our condition be never so pleasant and delightful, if we be not safe in it, if exposed to perils and dangers by enemies, what the better are we?

It may comfort us,

(1.) In reference to public concerns. We should be of a public spirit, that is, disposed to rejoice in any truth we hear (as many are in news told) that is for the good of God's people in general. Now

uch is this, the Lord Jesus Christ is his church's hield.

*He is a shield to the universal church*, visible and nvisible—to protect and defend it from all its enemies, within and without, open and secret, Matt. vi. 18. To his being so to it all along, we owe the ontinuance of the being of it in the world to this lay. The power and policy of hell and earth hath ot been wanting to undermine and destroy it, but ur Shield defends it.

Now it is his tabernacle. Moses's tabernacle was ecured from wind and weather, with a covering of ams' skins, and badgers' skins. So Christ is the overing of his church, Isa. iv. 5, 6.

It is his vineyard; and see what care he hath for he preservation of it, night and day, Isa. xxvii. 1—3.

It is his flock and fold; and to preserve it, see what he says, He will be a wall of fire round about.

It is his army, and to secure it he is a shield-general; not only captain-general, and ensign-general, but shield-general, for their protection. Therefore, ye that love Jerusalem, rejoice with her, Ps. cxxv. 1, 2. Her enemies shall not prevail.

*He is a shield to particular congregations*, and assemblies that profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him, especially that walk worthy of their profession, to protect and defend them against the wrath and violence of those that hate them. Are not we ourselves an instance, amongst many others in like circumstances? Had we been here to-day, if the blessed Jesus had not been a shield to us? Whose hand but his hath been our covering? It is true we have a good law, and a good king and queen,* but had they been for us, if the Lord Jesus had been against us? No, no; he hath been for us, therefore they. "The shields of the earth belong unto God," Ps. xlvii. 9. He that hath undertaken the protection of the whole tabernacle, hath undertaken the protection of every apartment in it. He that hath undertaken the care of the whole vineyard, hath undertaken the care of every bed in it. He that hath undertaken to look after the whole flock, hath undertaken to look after every sheep in it. He that hath the command of the whole army, hath the command of every troop in it. Therefore, to him let us give the glory. Therefore, on him let us still wait.

(2.) In reference to our own particular personal concerns, we have daily need of a shield; and we have one, and shall have him our shield, if we trust in him—even the blessed Jesus.

He is our shield to *secure and safe-guard us from God's wrath and curse due to us for our sins*. Were it not for him stepping between, every day we were undone. The blows falling upon us lighted upon our shield, and bruised him, Isa. liii. 4, 5. He was made a curse for us, died the death for us. O how should we love him!

He is our shield from *the rage and malice of Satan*. He goes about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us. And who secures us from him, but the blessed Jesus—the lion of the tribe of Judah? He takes our part.

He keeps us from being tempted, preventing us with preventing grace. He was led himself into the wilderness to be tempted; Matt. iv. 1. But he doth not lead us so; and it is a great mercy, and that for which we should be very thankful.

When we are tempted he is our shield to ward off the blow of the temptation, so that it shall not fall so heavy as otherwise it would, 1 Cor. x. 13. Luke xxii. 30, 31. He was tempted, but see Paul's testimony, "He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9.

He is our shield, to give us victory over the temptation, nay, to make us more than conquerors, that is, triumphers, as Job was. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations," 2 Pet. ii. 9. Eph. vi. 16.—*quenching* the fiery darts of the wicked.—

He is our shield from the *violence of wicked men*. God had no sooner withdrawn his shield of protection from Job, but presently the Chaldeans and the Sabeans were upon him. We cannot imagine what our adversaries that hate us would do unto us, not only to our assemblies and meeting places, but to our persons and families, if the blessed Jesus were not our shield, 2 Kings vi. 15—17.

He is our shield from *all the evils and disasters that we are day and night exposed to*; going out, coming in, lying down, rising up. It is true, he makes use of second causes in doing it, but himself is the principal. The angels are of his appointing, Ps. xxxiv. 7; xci. 11; and cxxi. He strengthens our bars, Ps. cxlvii. 13. He is our shield from sickness. He is the body's shield from falls and bruises. He is the children's shield from burning and scalding, Job i. 10. Say then, how much are we indebted, and what shall we render?

2. Learn hence what a sad condition they are in, to whom Christ is not a shield. How are they exposed to all the evils and enemies that are against them! Imagine a man in a field fighting, and no shield, no friend. This is thy condition, sinner. O be sensible of it, and be afraid.

3. By way of exhortation and instruction.

(1.) Make Christ your shield, by a hearty closing with him as such, from a due sight and sense of your absolute need of him, and of the insufficiency of all others, in heaven and earth, to safe-guard and defend you. Renounce them all, and cleave to him.

* King William III. and Queen Mary.

Suppose a paper or pasteboard shield were all the defence a man hath in time of battle—how hopeless!

(2.) Having made him your shield, make use of him as your shield, every day, in every thing. Go not out, lie not down, but under the shadow of his wings. Say, as in Ps. xx. 7. "Some trust in chariots and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." Look up to him for protection.

(3.) Having and using him as your shield, fear not. There is a fear of care and caution, which is our duty, and it is awakening. There is a slavish, weakening fear, which is our sin. How often are we warned against it—as here, "Fear not, I am thy shield."

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## SERMON XXV.

### CHRIST IS OUR STRENGTH.

PHIL. iv. 13.

*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

THIS were a big word of holy Paul, in the former part of this verse—*I can do all things*—unless he had somewhat qualified it by adding, in the latter part of the verse—*through Christ which strengtheneth me. Do all things?* One would hardly think it should be the same man that says elsewhere, I am nothing, the chiefest of sinners, less than the least of saints. Each of these sounds like humility, bespeaks him a humble, meek, lowly, self-denying man, such as we all should be; but to say, *I can do all things*, is high and strange. What could be said more even of God himself, Job xlii. 2. But his adding, *through Christ*, gives *him* the glory, even him who is God, blessed for evermore. It is true it is *I* that *do* when I do, but then it is as true, what I do Christ doth in me, Gal. ii. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 10. Then it is he and not I; his *strength*, and not my own.

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the alone strength of true believers, he is made unto us of God—strength.

Not only wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, not only sun and shield, but strength also. He doth not only strengthen us, but he is our strength. *The Lord is my strength*—in the same sense in which he is our life. We do not only live in him, and by him, and through him, but he himself is our life, Col. iii. 4. So *we* are not only strong in him, and by him, and through him, but he himself is our strength.

Show, I. What strength this is meant of.

II. What need we have of him to be our strength—wherein.

III. What are the properties of this strength.

IV. How and by what means does he communicate it to us.

V. What special inferences are to be drawn from it, that Jesus Christ is the strength of true believers.

I. Of what strength is this meant?

Strength is two-fold:

1. There is *natural strength*, which is strength of body. Some have very strong bodies in comparison of other; they are stronger to bear burthens, to endure hardship, to do work. The strongest that ever was was Samson. But that the story of him is a Scripture story, and therefore certainly true, one would hardly believe it, that he should kill a lion, slay a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass; carry the city gates, posts and all, on his back; burst the green withs; and overturn a house with his two hands, Judg. xiv. xv. xvi. The Lord was certainly with him, with him after a peculiar manner, strengthening him, or he could not have done it. He was herein a type of Christ. He is our Samson. Jer. l. 34. Now as to this strength, either we have it, or we have it not. We must be content if we have it; thankful. We must not by any means be proud of it, Jer. ix. 23, 24. For consider—there are sundry kinds of beasts that have more of it than we. We received it—and a small matter may take it away; a short fit of sickness.

2. There is spiritual strength, which is in the mind and soul; called strength in *the inner man*, Eph. iii. 16. The one of these may be where the other is not. Samson was strong in body, but weak in mind, else he would not have been deceived by a woman, Prov. vii. 26. Many are weak in the outer man—women are the weaker vessels—who, nevertheless, are of great spiritual strength.

II. What need is there that he should be our strength?

Those who think they have need of none have most need of all, as of righteousness, wisdom, washing, physician, so of strength.—That which needs strength is weakness. Now we are none of us weak, are we? All strong, strong to do any thing: we can *do all things*, I warrant. No such matter. We are weak and can do nothing, nothing, nothing truly good, as it ought to be done, further than Christ works it in us. "Without me"—separate from me, not taking me along with you—"ye can do nothing," John xv. 5. You cannot please God, profit others, save your own souls.

Our weakness is *universal weakness*. We are all over weak. I mean in the inner man; spiritually weak, Isa. i. 6.

We are weak in the head, weak-headed. The head is the upper region of the soul; the apprehending, understanding, remembering faculty is there. And are these strong or weak with us in spiritual things? Weak, certainly, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Do not ye find it so, in yourselves and others? Luke xiv. 25

Prov. xxx. 3. How dull, how forgetful! Is it not our daily complaint, and yet will we say we have no need of Christ? O see your need of him, and beg of him to give you "an understanding, that ye may know him that is true," 1 John v. 20. Beg of him to open your understanding, that ye may understand the Scriptures, Luke xxiv. 45. Every time we open the Bible to read, every time we go to hear a sermon, let us say, Lord Jesus, be strength to my understanding, my memory.

2. We are weak in the heart—weak-hearted, Ezek. xvi. 39.

The heart is put for the lower region, the will and the affections. In these, it is true, there is strength, but it lies the wrong way, as wise to do evil, but to do good we have no knowledge. We are strong and stiff in choosing evil, and fast in holding it; in refusing good motions, resisting, gain-saying, loving simplicity, hating knowledge, Prov. i. but as to that which is good, how weak are we to embrace it, and hold it fast. How weak are we in spiritual combats with sin and Satan; yielding presently, overcome immediately, easily, at the first onset. What is that but weakness? Now the Lord Jesus is the strength of our heart, Ps. lxxiii. 26.

3. We are weak in the hands—weak-handed.

The hand is the part that we receive with, if any gift offered, money, a jewel. Such a hand we must have, or we cannot be saved. Now that hand is faith. And are we strong or weak in believing? As weak as water; it is not in us to believe, till the Lord Jesus works it in us; faith is his gift.—The disciples were of little faith.

The hand is the part that we hold with, when we have received. Suppose a man taking hold of Christ, good hold, justifying hold, saving hold, can he keep that hold by any strength of his own? No, he cannot, but as Christ is his strength. He is weak.

The hand is what we work with. We have a great deal of work to do for God, for ourselves, for the good of others; repenting work, obeying work, praying work. And are we not weak in it, not only backward to it, but awkward, untoward? And is not he our strength? I can *do* all things through Christ, Isa. xxxiii. 2.

4. We are weak in the back and shoulders.

Those are the bearing parts; and are we strong there? Can we hold up under a heavy cross, or calamity befalling us? No, no. We sink, we droop, we faint, and that is a sign our strength is small, Prov. xxiv. 10. But if the blessed Jesus put to his helping hand, that strengthens, that upholds, Phil. i. 29. Col. i. 11. Therefore to him we must go in this case also.

5. We are weak in the feet.

Those are the standing parts, that bear the weight of the body. The shoulders bear other things, but the feet bear them. Now what feet hast thou, what ability to stand? We are often called on to *stand; stand therefore*, Eph. vi. But have we strengthof our own wherewithal? Do we stand on our own legs? No, certainly, Phil. iv. 1. "Stand fast in the Lord."

Those are the walking parts. And what walking ability have we? The way we are to walk, is in the way of God's commandments, of righteousness, of holiness, of our duty. Alas, how weak! not only weak-sighted, eyes weak, not seeing our way, however not clearly and plainly, but weak-footed; as appears,

(1.) By our aptness to stumble, even at straws. Every little thing offends, and turns us aside.

(2.) By the slowness of our pace. Were it not for weakness, how might we rid ground in our way to heaven.

(3.) By our inability to hold out. We are soon tired; we begin well, but are weary presently.

This weakness is born with us, and is increased through our own default, more and more.

It is growing weakness; old men become weaker and weaker;—and yet we are loth to own it, through pride of heart.

III. What are the properties of this strength?

1. It is divine strength. Less than divine strength, and other than divine strength, will not do divine work. We had need of the strength of God to take hold, and to wrestle with God, and to walk with God, and to work for God, and, therefore, such is provided for us. "By *his* strength he had power with God," Hos. xii. 3.—not by Jacob's own strength, but Jehovah's strength. Everlasting arms were under him, enabling him to tug and wrestle with him, as he did. "According to his glorious power," Col. i. 11.—not according to our own shameful weakness. Christ the *power* of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. Therefore, be of good comfort, thou feeble soul; God and a weak creature can do any thing.

2. It is daily strength, that is, strength that we have need of every day, and strength that is ready for us every day; "Be thou their arm every morning," Isa. xxxiii. 2. Think of this, when waking every morning.

Three things are to be done every day:

(1.) New temptations are to be resisted; and how else shall we be able to resist them, but in the strength of Jesus Christ? Read 1 Sam. xvii.

(2.) New afflictions are to be borne. Sufficient for each day is the evil of it. We are born to trouble, and born again to trouble, but whence are we able to bear it, but in the strength of Christ? Col. i. 11.

(3.) New duties are to be performed—towards God—towards our neighbours—towards our families—towards ourselves. And whence are we able to do them, but in the strength of Christ? Christ is our arm in every prayer, in every thanksgiving, in every repenting act, in every believing act. Are we to give reproof, to take reproof? Strength is needful. So in the affairs of our particular calling.

3. It is inward strength. I mean not only strength

in the inward man, in opposition to bodily strength, but strength arising and flowing from an inward principle. A man may be strong to do much, and suffer much, from external weights pulling and drawing, that is, from motives from without—to please men, or gain applause from men, but that is another thing from what is done by an inward principle, grace in the heart, the love of God shed abroad there, the love of Christ constraining, as the bias in the bowl, the spring in a watch. Both of them are out of sight, but both are strong and strengthening. Now inquire, Have ye this principle, can ye witness to such a drawing from within?

4. It is increasing strength. It is said of our Lord himself, that he grew in strength, Luke ii. 52. that is, as man. So do all that are his, Prov. iv. 18. They go from strength to strength, Ps. lxxxiv. 7. Job xvii. 9. Thence it is that true believers who live long are best at last. Other things weaken by age, but grace strengthens by it.

5. It is suitable strength. It is suited

*To persons* that have it, according as their age, condition, need requires. The little finger hath not the strength of the arm, nor is it needful it should have it. So a private Christian needs not the strength of a magistrate, or minister; nor the child, or the servant, that of the master, or father, in the family. It is suited also

*To the work* that is to be done with it. All work requires not the same measure of strength for the doing of it; one hath work of one kind, now of another. See Numb. vii. 6—8. "As thy days so shall thy strength be," Deut. xxxiii. 25.

6. It is sufficient strength, 2 Cor. xii. 9. As for ourselves, we have no sufficiency of our own to any thing that is good. No matter, while there is an all-sufficiency in the grace of Christ. Therefore, fear not that any temptation, affliction, duty, will be too hard for thee, Ps. xxiii. 4.

IV. How is this strength communicated to us?

1. By the immediate influences of his Spirit, Eph. iii. 16. As it is the Spirit that quickens, so it is the Spirit that strengthens. He is the soul of our souls; as all the strength the body hath it hath from the soul, so all the strength the soul has is from the Spirit. He works all our works in us, and for us, Isa. xxvi. 12. Our mortifying work, Rom. viii. 13. our repenting work, Zech. xii. 10. our praying work, Rom. viii. 26.

2. By the ordinances.

The word is strengthening both read and preached. It strengthens the head in knowledge, the heart in faith, and love, and all obedience.

The sacraments as seals are strengthening: what a help to believing!

3. By good society. Ps. lxxxiv. 7. "They go from strength to strength;" that is, they increase in number, and by that means in strength.

V. What special inferences are to be drawn hence?

1. Learn what is the reason we are so weak, the ground of all our infirmities. We are Christless, Christless.

Some are totally so, therefore, tossed to and fro like children, by errors, by temptation: therefore no work is done for God, or for the soul.

All in part are so; we go forth in our own strength; as Peter, and you know what came of it.

2. Learn what to do that we may be strengthened. Ask it of God in the name of Jesus Christ, Ps. lxviii. 28. Isa. xxxiii. 2. Every day in every thing.

3. Learn what to do when we have asked and received it. Use it; it is a talent. We can do more than we think we can, through Christ strengthening.

4. Learn what to do when duty is done, especially if well done; give him the glory, Ps. cxv. 1. Gal. ii. 20. 1 Cor. xv. 10.

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## SERMON XXVI.

### CHRIST IS OUR SONG.

Ps. cxviii. 14.

*The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.*

CHRIST, the true treasure, is certainly hid in the field of the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Psalms, yet more particularly in this psalm. Who else but he is the stone refused by the builders, and made the head-stone of the corner? *v.* 22. Who else but he is here spoken of? *v.* 14. *my strength and song.* Is it not the same that is become *our salvation?* our Jesus? All true believers may as truly say it in their measure as David,—he is *my song.*

DOCT. That Jesus Christ alone is, and ought to be, the song of all true believers.

Show, I. In what sense we are to understand it.

II. What of Jesus Christ is it that is especially a believer's song.

III. What are the properties of that song which Jesus Christ is to all true believers.

IV. Make the application.

I. In what sense are we to understand this, the Lord is my strength and song?

To be sure, not in that sense in which Job says, "Now am I their song, yea, I am their by-word." Job xxx. 9. Or David—"I was the song of the drunkard," Ps. lxix. 12. It is enough, and too much, that he is so to unbelievers, to them that swear by his blood and wounds, as unholy things, trampling them under their feet. No; "Unto you which believe he is precious," 1 Pet. ii. 7. Believers have other thoughts of him, carry it otherwise towards him; and

it is one of their best evidences that they are true believers.

But it is to be understood in a three-fold sense:

1. He is the main object of their hope and trust, and ought to be so. Of this we discoursed before, from 1 Tim. i. 1.* That which is our confidence uses to be our song. If gold be our confidence, gold is our song; if our great friends are our confidence, they are our song; and so every thing else. Now a believer's great, nay only, confidence is the Lord Jesus Christ; his hope is in him, and in no other; no, not in God himself, nor in the mercy of God, nor promises out of Christ. "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song, he also is become my salvation," Isa. xii. 2. Are our sins to be forgiven, our performances to be accepted? His merit and righteousness alone must be our song. We must hope and trust in no other.

2. He is the main subject of their praises and thanksgivings, and ought to be so. We have many occasions to sing, that is, to give thanks, upon the account of the many many mercies and deliverances vouchsafed, both public and personal, Ps. xxxii. 7. Nay, we must sing not of mercy only, but judgment also, Ps. ci. 1. Like the nightingale, even when the thorn is at our breast. But the mercy of mercies that we are to sing of, and to bless God for, is Jesus Christ, the gift of gifts, the unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15.

3. He is the main matter of their joy and rejoicing, and ought to be so. He is the *head* of their joy, Ps. cxxxvii. 6. He is the *gladness* of their joy, Ps. xliii. 4. We may rejoice in other things: husbands are bid to live joyfully with the wife of their youth, Eccl. ix. We must eat our bread with joy, and rejoice in the labour of our hands; but still Jesus Christ must be our *chief* joy. Our song must be of him, above and beyond them all: and is it so? Can we appeal to God and say, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that it is so? If we can, it is a good sign of the good work wrought in us. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh," Phil. iii. 3. Mark, no confidence; Jesus Christ alone is our confidence. And where is our joy? Is it not in Christ Jesus? He that rejoices aright in Christ Jesus can find enough in him to rejoice in, in the want of other things, Hab. iii. 17, 18.

Three things are requisite to the making of Jesus Christ our song, that is, the main matter of our joy and rejoicing.

(1.) An interest in him. Not a common interest, which all have in him as a common Saviour; but a peculiar interest, a special interest, as *my* Saviour: this must be supposed. Now that which gives this interest is our closing with him by faith; it is believing that makes him ours; that is the foot by which we come to him, the hand by which we receive him, the mouth by which we feed upon him. What is it that makes two one in the conjugal relation, but the mutual assent and consent each to the other? Hos. iii. 3. So it is here.

(2.) The knowledge of that interest. Many have the former that have not this, and that is the reason why many, concerning whom we hope they are truly in Christ Jesus, yet do not rejoice in him as they ought. He is not their song. Their strength he is, to uphold and support them, that they sink not under their doubts and despondences, but their song he is not. The more is the pity that these two should be parted; yet sometimes it is so. *Zion* said, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me," Isa. xlix. 14. And is it any marvel, when the King of Zion himself hath said so, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Ps. xxii. 1. It therefore concerns all true believers that have an interest in Christ, to clear up their interest to their own souls, that they may be able to say, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his," and, therefore, he is and shall be my song.

(3.) Suitable walking. If we let the reins loose to sin and folly; if we suffer the world and vanities of it to encroach upon us, and to steal away our thoughts and affections, that will quickly spoil Christ's being our song, Hos. ix. 1. Joy is forbidden fruit to a backslider, such have other work to do. It is they only that keep conscience void of offence, that walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, that keep close to God and duty, I say, it is they only, that can rejoice in Christ Jesus. And therefore, see to it all ye that desire to make Christ your song, and to rejoice always in him; mind your way; mend your pace; ply your work.

II. What of Christ especially is a believers' song? True believers sing, and ought to sing,

1. Of what Jesus Christ is in himself as to his personal excellences and perfections. It is usual to make songs, and to sing them by way of encomium, or praising, of worthy men that outshine others. They made songs of Saul, and of his valour; of David also. David himself made a song in praise of Jonathan. And have not we much more cause to make and sing songs of the blessed Jesus? Is there any like him, any in heaven, or on earth, to be compared with him? There is something in him that makes him more admirable than his being a Saviour. What is that? His perfections as God infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, and power. Of these we ought to sing. His name is *Michael*—who is like thee, O Lord! We ought to sing of him as a Saviour, *our* Saviour.—So in the text—*and is become my salvation*. There is no need to make songs to this purpose, there are some made

* See Discourse VI.

already; read Ps. xlv. The book of Solomon's Song is an encomium of our Solomon, read *ch.* v. 10, &c.

2. We ought to sing of what he is to us. You have heard in sundry particulars already, and more is yet behind. He is our foundation, our food, our root, our raiment; and should we not sing of these? Is there not cause?

3. We ought to sing of what he hath done, and is doing, and will yet do, for us.

*What he hath done.* He hath taken our nature upon him, and in our nature suffered and died; he hath washed us from our sins in his own blood; called us with a holy calling; begun a good work.

*What he is doing.* Is he not ever living to make intercession for us? Is he not guiding and guarding us, enlightening and comforting us, every day?

*What he will do for us.* He will perform the good work that he hath begun; he will come again and fetch us to himself, that where he is there we may be also. Can ye name any other to sing of, that hath done the like for you?

III. What are the properties of this song?

1. He is the angels' song. They were singing songs at the beginning of time, to the praise and glory of God—creator, Job xxxviii. 7. Aye, and they were singing too in the fulness of time, Luke ii. and what was their song? It was to the praise and glory of God—redeemer, Luke ii. 13, 14. Though they could not sing, as we, *Who washed us from our sins*—yet for our sake they sang, *On earth, peace.* Yea, and for their own confirmation also. So that it is no disparagement to be heard singing this song, when the blessed angels themselves sing it. Christ is their song.

2. He is the most ancient song; the song of the ancients. All the Old-Testament saints sung of him, and rejoiced in him. Abraham saw his day, and rejoiced; the patriarchs sung of him; the prophets sung of him; Isaiah especially, the evangelical prophet, read *ch.* v. xii. xxvi. xxvii. and lxiii. only with this difference, they sung of him as one to come, for they saw him, though it was but as through the lattices, or as through a glass darkly.

3. He is the new song. Wherever ye read of a new song in Scripture, it points at him, Ps. xxxiii. 3; xl. 3; xcvi. 1; xcviii. 1; cxlix. 1. He is the New-Testament song. Ever since his coming in the flesh all his saints have been singing of him, as of one already come; rejoicing in him, and showing forth his praises. As fast as they have been made new creatures they have learned this new song.

New, that is, excellent, because when things are new they are at the best.

New, upon the account of new occasion given, a new mercy received.

4. He is their night song, Ps. xlii. 8. Job xxxv. 10. In the night season, when others are sleeping, true believers are rejoicing in God their Redeemer, and solacing themselves in him, Ps. cxlix. 5. Cant. i. 13. Acts xvi. Paul and Silas sang at midnight.

In the night of sorrow and affliction. To be able to sing then, when every thing looks sad and sorrowful round about us, is a great matter; as David 1 Sam. xxx. 6.

5. He is their song all the week, and their song on the sabbath. We are bid to rejoice in the Lord always, every day, and they that have an interest in Christ, and know it, do so; but especially on sabbath days, Ps. cxviii. 24. Sabbath days are set apart on purpose. Ps. xcii. is entitled a Psalm or Song for the Sabbath day, v. 1—3.

6. He is their song while they live, and their song when they die. While they live, in all the turns of their lives, Ps. cxlvi. 2. And in a special manner when they come to die; upon sick-beds, and death-beds. As it is said of the swan, that she sings sweetest when dying, so it is with many of God's people. At the death of Mr. John Janeway,* one present said, he never was in a room where God in Christ had more praises than there at that time.

7. He is their song in the world, and will be their song to eternity. What is the great employment of heaven, and what will it be for ever and ever, but to lift up God-redeemer, Rev. v. 9—13. Jesus Christ is to be our everlasting song, Isa. xxxv. 10. It is good to be found doing that now that we would be glad to be found doing hereafter—world without end.

IV. Let us make the application.

1. This may serve for an examining sign, or mark of trial, whereby to know what we are as to our spiritual state and condition. We are bid to try ourselves, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. The glory of God and our own comfort depend much upon our knowing, or not knowing, of ourselves. Marks are needful for our help herein. Amongst others this; What is Jesus Christ to us? What think we of him? Hath he ever been our song? Do we rejoice in him? Do we not rejoice in other things more than in him? Have not other things more of our thoughts, desires, pursuits, joys? If yea, suspect thyself, and change thy way. Conversion is often spoken of under the notion of singing, Ps. cxxxviii. 4, 5. Isa. liv. 1. Rom. xv. 9, 10.

Get acquainted with Jesus Christ. The Word reveals him to us, but the Spirit reveals him in us. Pray for that Spirit. Be learning Christ daily.

Make him thy own by believing; accept of him; close with him; let all go for him.

Having done this, be often meditating what the blessings and benefits are that are made over to us by him, and through him—justification, adoption, and sanctification—and call them all thy own: Ps. xlviii. 11, 12.

* A. D. 1667, æt. 23. See Clarke's Lives, p. 69. fol. ed. 1683

2. Here is a word of reproof to the true believers nong us, that do not make Christ their song, that 'e in him, but do not rejoice in him; however, not ith evenness and constancy, not in that measure ıd degree, that they should and ought. Thou ıouldst chide thyself for it, Ps. xlii. and xliii. 5. onsider—

It grieves the Spirit of God.

It blemishes the ways of God; makes thee a umbling-block to them that are without, like the ril spies.

It is weakening to thyself. The more Christ is ır song the more is our strength, Neh. viii. 10. hen search out the cause.

3. Exhortation, to all that call themselves be- ɔvers. Make Christ your song, week days and ıbbath days.

He is worthy that you should.

The gain of it will be thy own, in present comfort, ı eternal recompence. "Now the Lord of hope fill ɔu with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may bound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 13.

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## SERMON XXVII.

### CHRIST IS OUR HORN.

LUKE i. 68, 69.

*Blessed be the Lord—for he hath raised up an* HORN *of salvation for us.*

THESE are the first words of the song of Zacharias, ıe father of John, wherein he blesses God, not for ohn, though John was to him a great mercy, being ıe son of his old age; yea, and a mercy to all srael, being the prophet of the Highest, and the ɔrerunner of Jesus; but for Jesus, the mercy of ıercies, the universal mercy. If you ask wherein? I answer,—As a Redeemer—*who hath visited and* EDEEMED—God the Father, by God the Son; ot from corporal, but from spiritual, slavery. We ave cause to bless God every day for a Redeemer. ınd

*As a horn of salvation.*

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is raised up of God to be a *horn of salvation* to all true believers.

Show, I. The meaning of this—why a horn, and vherein a horn of salvation. And,

II. What kind of horn of salvation Jesus Christ s—what are the properties of this horn. And,

III. Make the application.

I. I am to explain this—a horn of salvation.

A horn hath many significations in Scripture:

1. There are horns, properly so called, wherewith beasts are armed; some with two, some, it is said, with one, as the unicorn, which hath its name from having but one horn, Ps. xxii. 20, 21. These horns are not only the beauty of the beast that hath them, but his strength also: with them he pushes, and gores, and tosses to and fro what is in his way; and it is incredible what the strength of some creatures is in their horns.

2. There are figurative horns.

We read of the *horns of the altar;* to which the beasts were tied that were unruly when they were to be sacrificed, Ps. cxviii. 27.—and to which Joab fled for refuge from the avenger of blood that was in pursuit of him, 1 Kings ii. 28.

The *power of wicked men*, wherewith they vex and oppress their poor neighbours, is called their horn, Ps. lxxv. 4, 5, 10. The godly also have their horns, "The horns of the righteous shall be exalted," Ps. lxxv. 10.—that is, I will advance them to honour and power. It is never well with a nation or kingdom but when it is so, Prov. xi. 10. Antiochus,* that bloody enemy of the Old-Testament church, the type of the antichrist, is called in Daniel, *the little horn*, Dan. vii. 8, 21.

3. There is the musical horn, to blow with; either made of a beast's horn, or of some other materials framed in the likeness of a beast's horn; crooked, 1 Chron. xxv. 5. The same are elsewhere called cornets, Ps. xcviii. 5, 6. Dan. iii. 5, 15.

4. There is a vessel called a horn wherein oil was put, when David was anointed king by Samuel, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 13. Saul was anointed with a *vial* of oil, a small quantity, 1 Sam. x. 1. David was anointed with a *horn*, that is, abundance of oil; noting the difference that was to be between them—in their gifts for government—and in the duration of their kingdom.

Now which of all these is applicable to Jesus Christ? I will tell you when I shall first have told you what the salvation is. Salvation is three-fold.

*Temporal*—from temporal enemies.

*Spiritual*—from sin, and the world, and the devil.

*Eternal*—in heaven, from the wrath that is to come. Neither is that all. Salvation of each sort hath more in it than rescue from evil, it includes also the presence and fruition of the contrary good. So that salvation is the main matter. When it is said of Christ that he is *a horn of salvation*, it means—that he is the author and procurer of all good to us, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. It is he also that saves and delivers us from all evil, bodily and ghostly, present and future. Well might Zachary say, "Blessed be the Lord, for he hath raised up an horn of salvation," Ps. lxviii. 19, 20.

A horn of *salvation*, namely, a saving horn. Other

* Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria. He died, B. C. 1650, in the 12th year of his reign, and the 39th of his life.

horns are destroying horns; beasts' horns are so; the little horn was so. But, lo, here is a saving horn, a horn that hurts nobody but those that stand it out against him, and think to fight it out with him; them he pushes and gores, and ruins with a witness, Luke xix. 27; xx. 18. As for others, he is to them a saving horn, a redeeming horn, a delivering horn.

II. What are the properties of this horn of salvation?

There are only two properties—according to the two-fold signature of a horn.

He is a plentiful horn of salvation, as horn signifies plenty. And,

He is a plentiful horn of salvation, as horn signifies power.

I shall put them together in this proposition:—*There is plenty of powerful salvation in Jesus Christ, by the appointment of the Father, for all true believers*, that is, for all that will come to him for it. I shall show,

1. That salvation by Jesus Christ is powerful salvation.

What we translate *a horn of salvation*, is by some rendered *a mighty salvation*. Salvation by Jesus Christ is mighty salvation, Jer. l. 34. *Their Redeemer is strong*. If he were not strong and mighty, yea, almighty, he could be no Redeemer for us, because of the mighty enemies that were, and are, against us; and because of the vigorous opposition they make to hinder our salvation. He that will be the Author of salvation to us must be strong enough to deal,

(1.) With God: for he is against us as sinners. His justice is our enemy, and must be satisfied. And can the blessed Jesus do that for us? is he able? Yes, he is able, in the sense in which we call a rich man an able man; he is able in respect of wealth and riches, to pay all our debts, if they were a thousand times more and greater than they are, not farthings, and pence, and pounds only, but even talents; and therefore, if any be sent to the prison of hell for their debts, it is not for want of a sufficient surety to undertake for them, but for want of accepting of him, Heb. vii. 25. O mix faith with this, and say, If it be so, why am I thus? His merit is of infinite worth and value.

(2.) With Satan. He is the gaoler in whose custody all unregenerate people are. They are his prisoners, his captives, his galley-slaves now, and must be with him for ever. And can the blessed Jesus deal with him? is he hard enough for him? He is certainly; he *hath broken his head*, Gen. iii. 17. He hath *led captivity captive*, Ps. lxviii. 20—made *a shew of him openly*, Col. ii. vanquished and destroyed him.—We read, in Matt. iv. of a duel which he fought with him,—though upon great advantage on the devil's part, yet he beat him out of the field, which was a pledge, or specimen, or earnest, of his great victory by dying, Heb. ii. 14. It must needs be so. Though the devil have great power, as well as great wrath, Eph. vi. 12. yet his power is but created power. He is a creature still. But our Redeemer is Jehovah. There are two lions; the one—a fallen angel, 1 Pet. v. 8. the other—God blessed for ever, the lion of the tribe of Judah.

It is an act of infinite power to fetch a soul at first out of the devil's clutches—by converting grace, Luke xi. 24.

It is an act of infinite power to preserve us ever after, from being ruined by him.

(3.) With the corrupt nature in us. This is as hard to be dealt with, to be subdued and conquered, as the devil himself. Suppose an impregnable castle defended by a mighty giant, a Goliah; that is the case. There are two wards in this castle, as at Chester, the higher ward, and the lower ward.

*The understanding*, that is the higher ward; fortified with invincible ignorance, inveterate prejudices. These he pulls down, 2 Cor. x. 4. He enlightens the mind, Eph. v. 8. It is strange with what power.

*The will*, that is the lower ward; stubborn, obstinate; will by no means be persuaded, till the mighty grace of Christ comes, Ps. cx. 3.

(4.) With the malice and power of wicked men, the professed enemies of God's people. Can the blessed Jesus deal with them? Is his horn strong enough for their horns?—Certainly it is, and will be sure to overcome them.

(5.) With death and the grave, 1 Cor. xv. 56, 57.

2. There is plenty of this powerful salvation, enough, and enough again; not a vial, but a horn, of salvation. It is the appointment of the Father that it should be so, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell," Col. i. 19. He is all *fulness dwelling*—not for himself, but for us, John i. 16. As the fulness of milk in the mother's breasts, of light in the sun, or the fulness of water in the spring or fountain, which is a flowing fulness, Zech. xiii. 1. "a fountain." Not a vessel or laver, alluding to that wherein the priests were to wash—larger in Solomon's time than it was in Moses's time, though still only a laver; but here is a *fountain*. There is a great deal of difference between a laver and a fountain. Our wants are many and great, and if our supplies be not accordingly, what will become of us?

(1.) We want righteousness wherein to appear before God every day—for the pardon of our sins,—and for the acceptation of our services. Our own will not do. He hath it for us; he hath enough, a horn of righteousness; Dan. ix. 24. *everlasting* righteousness. A spring that cannot be exhausted, Jer. xxiii. 6. He is Jehovah our righteousness.

(2.) We want wisdom to lead and guide us in all the practical affairs of our souls. How oft are we

a loss for want of it! Lo, here is a horn of wisdom r thee, divine, heavenly wisdom, Col. ii. 3. Not r himself, but for us; not to be laid up, but to be id out, 1 Cor. i. 30. James i. 5.—he gives *liberally*.

(3.) We want strength; strength to do in doing ne; to suffer in suffering time. Our strength is eakness; our sufficiency, insufficiency, 2 Cor. iii. Lo, here is a horn of strength for thee. Not only strong horn, in itself strong, but a horn of strength r *us*, to make us *strong*. See discourse on Phil. iv. 3.* We can do nothing without Christ, John xv. but all things through Christ.

(4.) We want grace. Some want it altogether—ey have none of it. Others, that have it, want ore of it, more faith, and more humility, and more eekness, patience, contentation, submission. Lo, ere is a horn of grace for thee, a fulness. Wouldst ou have more faith? pray as the apostles, Luke vii. 5. "Lord, increase our faith."

(5.) We want peace, that is, comfort in our souls, om the sense of God's love and favour towards us. [any a one would give all the world, if they had , for one smile of his face. Lo, here is a horn of eace and comfort for thee in Christ Jesus, John iv. 27. 2 Pet. i. 2. He is our peace—not only our eace-maker, but our peace-matter. Away to him ien by believing.

(6.) We want eternal life; want it indeed, for we ave forfeited it, and are never likely to recover it y any thing we can do. This is salvation—the op-stone. Now there is with Christ a horn of this lso, John x. 10.

(7.) We have temporal wants also; some of one ind, some of another. I put these last because hey are the least; of least consequence in com-arison, though we are apt to complain most of them. )ne wants health; another wherewithal to pay his iebts, and maintain his family, and pay his taxes; nother is struck at by enemies, and wants a friend o stand by him. Lo, here is a horn of supply for hee in all thy wants; one that hath wherewithal; or the earth is his, and the fulness thereof, as well s heaven, and the fulness thereof,—"My God shall upply all your need," Phil. iv. 19.—it includes emporal needs. When he sent forth his apostles vithout purse or scrip, at their return he asked hem, Lacked ye any thing; and they said, Nothing, Lord.

III. The application.

1. Let this advance your esteem of the blessed Jesus. Think of him according to what is meet, as a strong, mighty, rich, able Saviour. The pre-emi-nence is his; let him have it, Col. i. 18.

2. Let us bless the Lord God of Israel, who hath raised up the horn of salvation for us, laid help upon one that is mighty, Ps. lxxxix. 19. We have cause to be thankful for our temporal salvations by him, but especially for spiritual and eternal salvation. "Lift up the horn," 1 Chron. xxv. 5. that is, Christ. They sung the gospel psalms, such as Psalms ii. lxviii. cx. &c.

3. Let us make sure our interest in this horn by heartily closing with him upon gospel terms, that we may each of us call him *my* horn, Ps. xviii. 2.

4. Live upon him with all holy joy and cheerfulness, Eccl. ix. 8. There is no room for despair or distrust.

5. Live to him in all holy obedience—care to please, fear to offend—in order to living with him.

* Discourse XXV.

## SERMON XXVIII.

### CHRIST IS OUR HONOUR.

1 PETER ii. 7.

*Unto you, therefore, which believe, he is precious.*

THE DOCTRINE from these words is this, That Jesus Christ is an honour to all true believers.

To be precious to them, and to be an *honour* to them, you say, are two things.

I reply, They are in effect the same. However, to be an honour to them is, I am sure, more agreeable to the original, for what else is the Greek word here, but an honour? See the margin.

Two things I mean by it:

1. He is the Author of honour to them

2. He is, and ought to be, the object of honour from them. He honours them, and they do, and should, honour him. The latter follows upon the former. The former is to be spoken to as to the doctrine, the latter as the application by way of inference from it.

Show, I. Wherein, and upon what accounts, Jesus Christ is the Author of honour to all true believers.

II. What kind of honour it is.

III. What we learn from it.

I. How is the Lord Jesus the Author of honour to all true believers?

We use to say concerning the king, that he is the fountain of honour, that is, all his subjects that are men of honour, derive their honour from him. Others give them honour, but it is he that makes them honourable. Now King Jesus is he, and he alone, that is the fountain of honour to all true believers; they derive their honour from him.

1. He hath himself an honourable esteem of them. They are persons of honour, even the meanest of them, in his account, Isa. xliii. 4. He finds them, as all the rest of the children of Adam, without honour,

even as the beasts that perish by nature, Ps. xlix. 12, 20:—this is the burthen of that Psalm, but he doth not leave them so. They find favour in his eyes through his own mere mercy and free grace, and then he honours them: he loves them and then honours them. Just as it is with kings oftentimes; they do not honour men for desert sake but for good pleasure sake; they will because they will; and thence many unworthy men are men of honour. So the King of kings. We must say, "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared: not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," Tit. iii. 4—6. We must all say in like manner, *Not by works of righteousness.* It was the dear love he had to them, and the honourable esteem he had of them, that made him do and suffer as he did for their ransom and recovery, Rev. i. 5.—loved and washed; as John xiii. 1.—loved, and therefore washed their feet with water. He took upon him the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 7. And like a servant, he served that he might honour us. His degrading purchased our honour, Luke xxii. 27. O how should this affect us!

2. His will is, that every one else should be in this like himself, in having an honourable esteem of them. As when the king bestows a degree of honour upon a person, makes him a knight, or a lord, or an earl, he expects others so to regard him; so it is here. See Esth. vi. 3, 6, 7. They that do not honour the true saints and servants of the God of heaven, do not do as Jesus Christ would have them do, Ps. v. 4. It is made the character of a citizen of Zion, that he honours them that fear the Lord; *honours* them, hath a high and honourable esteem of them; how low and mean soever they may be in the world, as to their worldly state and condition. How much soever they may be despised, and scoffed, and scorned at by others, they are the excellent of the earth, in his eye, because they are so in Christ's eye, Ps. xvi. 2.

3. He hath done that for them, which in the account and esteem of men may, and doth, deserve that honour. I do not say, they deserve that he should honour them, I said the contrary before, but that men should honour them, Rom. xiii. 7.—honour to whom honour.

What is it that he hath done for them that may be the ground of men's honouring them?

(1.) One ground of honouring men is upon the account of their personal excellences and endowments; some are honourable for their learning, and knowledge in arts and sciences; some for their wisdom and prudence in the management of secular affairs; in the field, as soldiers; in the senate, as counsellors. Now if so, the people fearing God deserve honour indeed, for they have better knowledge than others. They from the least even to the greatest know God. And whence have they that knowledge, but from Christ, who gives them an understanding? 1 John v. 20. They have wisdom also; another sort of wisdom; wisdom from above in soul affairs: they are wise to discern the times—and whence have they that wisdom, but from Jesus Christ, who is made unto them of God wisdom? 1 Cor. i. 30. They search the Scriptures, and those make them wise; and therefore noble, Acts xvii. 11.

(2.) Upon the account of their great usefulness in their particular places and stations; in court or camp, for peace or war. Doth this deserve honour? Then saints deserve it; for who are more useful than they?

*By their prayers:* fetching down mercies, keeping off judgments, as Moses.

*By their presence:* they are chariots and horsemen, the militia of the country: allude to 2 Kings iii. 14.

*By their pattern:* they are the lights of the world shining amongst men; giving good examples; showing which is the way to heaven, by walking in it. And whence is all this, but from the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which is in them and with them? It is grace that enables them, and therefore he is their honour.

(3.) Upon the account of their honourable relations wherein they stand. He that is himself in honour reflects honour upon all that are related to him. Now what are the relations of true believers?

*They are all the children of God;* and how, but by faith in Jesus Christ? Gal. iii. 16. John i. 12. And is not that a high honour? We honour the children of great men for their honourable parents' sake; and is there not reason then that we should honour true believers, that are the sons and daughters of God Almighty? They are honourable by birth, not the first, but the second, both by father and mother, Gal. iv. 26. Amongst men some have one that have not the other; but we have both.

To be a servant, even the meanest, to men of honour, carries honour in it. Then believers are honourable, for *they are the King of heaven's servants*, by their own choice and by his acceptance, Ps. cxvi. 16.

Nay; *they are his friends*, admitted to his secrets, acquainted with his counsels, John xv. 15. As Hushai was a friend to David, 2 Sam. xv. 37. Zabud to Solomon, 1 Kings iv. 5. Sir Fulk Grevil had inscribed on his tomb—Servant to Queen Elizabeth, and friend to Sir Philip Sydney.

(4.) Some are made honourable by marriage;—the wife by the husband. Then all true believers are honourable, for they are all, and each of them, espoused to the Lord Jesus, and his honour is their honour, 2 Cor. xi. 2. Read Ps. xlv. which is the nuptial song.

(5.) Some are honourable on account of their

nourable hopes. Young heirs are honoured for their heritance sake, though as yet under age. Then all ue believers ought to be honoured, for they are all irs, not of an earthly, but a heavenly, inheritance; irs of heaven, nay more, heirs of God. God him-lf is their inheritance, and higher we cannot go, om. viii. 17. Their honourable attendants are e angels, Heb. i. 14. nay, the Son himself, Luke ii. 37.

(6.) Some are honourable on account of their ho-urable offices and employments, Rev. i. 5.—kings id priests; so he makes them.

(7.) Others are honourable on account of their nourable name, James ii. 7. The word Christian from Christ: all this honour have all his saints, s. cxlix. 9.

II. What kind of honour is it that true believers ave from Jesus Christ? It hath these properties.

1. It is real honour. Other honours are but a adow, a dream, a fancy. This hath substance in , Prov. viii. 21. As the riches of a believer are ubstantial riches, not things that are not, Prov. xiii. 5.—so the honours of a believer are substan-al honours. God doth really and truly honour uch; so doth the blessed Jesus; so do the angels.

2. It is righteous honour. Other honours which ne honourable men of the earth have, are often-mes unrighteous—unjustly given, and unjustly aken; when they that have them do not deserve to ave them. But here it is deserved; not, as we said efore, at the hands of God—we can merit nothing, ut at the hands of men it is, 2 Sam. vi. 22.

3. It is heavenly honour. Other honours are from elow, this is from above; other honours are upon arthly accounts, this upon heavenly. The birth of believer is heavenly, his endowments heavenly; e is heaven-born, and heaven-bred. His inherit-nce is in heaven hereafter; his conversation is here now. Therefore if it were asked—Is it from eaven, or of men? Luke xx. 4. you may answer, s to this honour—From both; but principally and riginally from heaven.

4. It is harmless honour. Other honours often urt those that have them, puff them up with pride, nake them haughty and high-minded, as Haman, ut so doth not this. Paul, to whom Christ was nore an honour than to any other, was humble. Who was more humble than he, more low and mean n his own eyes? Eph. iii. 8. 2 Cor. xii. 11.

5. It is unsought honour. What endeavours are here to obtain other honours; what struggling and triving; what cringing and courting; what bribing nd waiting. But here it is not so. This honour s truly like our shadow, it follows those that, in the ense of their own unworthiness, fly from it, and it lies from those that, in pride of heart, are ambitious f it, Matt. xx. 20—28. Ezek. xvi. 6.

6. It is unfading honour. It is honour that lasts, it is lasting, everlasting. We have known divers that for a time have been in great honour, upon the very topmost pinnacle of honour, and by and by in disgrace and dishonour, hooted at; but it is not so here. As he loves to the end, John xiii. 1. so he will honour to the end; not only to the end of time, but to an endless eternity; for ever and ever. We shall never fall from this honour.

III. What may we learn from this subject?

1. We learn what to think of the great and glorious Majesty of heaven and earth. His name, and his Son's name, is certainly, upon this account, to be admired and adored by us, and by all his creatures, angels and men. For what? For his infinite love and free grace, in condescending in this manner to a remnant of Adam's seed, so as to put all this honour upon them. We have cause to say, as David, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Ps. viii. 1, 3, 4, 9. Or, as the same David elsewhere, with reference to the honour done unto himself, in his advancement to the kingdom, "Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto," 2 Sam. vii. 18. Especially may those say so, who themselves are made partakers of this honour, who are received into the family of God, who are made his servants, his friends, his children, though so mean, so vile. Lord, what am I, or what is my father's house?

2. We learn what to think of those who are not believers; all the ignorant, careless, carnal, unregenerate generation; certainly, they have no part nor lot in this matter. They are none of those that God will honour. They are all strangers to this dignity and advancement. Would you know what the esteem of God is concerning them? Look into his word; see what that says concerning good men. It says, they are God's jewels, the excellent of the earth, his favourites, his children, the dearly beloved of his soul. But what says it of the wicked? They are chaff, dross, dogs, swine. O then, see that none of you be such; fear, fear lest it be your condition.

3. We learn what is the true way to true honour. It is in our nature to desire it—as to be covetous in desiring wealth, voluptuous in desiring pleasure, so ambitious in desiring honour. But the misery is, we mistake our end, and consequently our way. We take those things to be wealth, and pleasure, and honour, that are not so, and that not to be so which is so; and we pursue accordingly. O be convinced that the way to be honoured, I mean, to have Christ an honour to us, is to believe, that is, to close with him upon gospel terms, Isa. lx. 19.—*thy God thy*

*glory*—Isa. xxviii. 5. John xii. 26. 1 Sam. ii. 30. Ps. xci. 15.

4. We learn what is our duty towards those to whom Christ is an honour. Certainly it is our duty to see them truly honourable, and to love and honour them accordingly. Allude to 2 Kings xx. 12, 13. The Babylonians worshipped the sun, and knowing that for Hezekiah's sake their god had gone back, they sent to do him honour. Let this advance your esteem and enhance your value of good men—that Christ himself does them honour; and, they deserve it at your hands, though not at his.

5. We learn what is their duty to whom Christ is an honour. To make it their business to honour him all they can, all their days; as they should love him, so they should honour him, 1 John iv. 19.

*Why is he to be honoured?*

He is worthy that it should be so; truly worthy, as God, as God-man, as our Redeemer and Saviour.

It is the Father's will it should be so, John v. 22, 23. Col. i. 18, 19. Therefore, he has the pre-eminence, because it pleased the Father.

It will be our own benefit and comfort, living and dying. We shall be no losers, but gainers, by it.

*Wherein are we to honour him?*

In general—let him be precious to you.

Have high and honourable thoughts of him.

Speak high and honourable things concerning him, as Paul did.

Do nothing to displease and dishonour him, but every thing contrary, Phil. i. 2.

Let other things be precious to you, and persons, for their relation sake to him; his word, day, worship, people.

Stand upon your honour; perform promises; do nothing below you.

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## SERMON XXIX.

### CHRIST IS OUR SANCTIFICATION.

1 CORINTHIANS i. 30.

*Who of God is made unto us* SANCTIFICATION.

THESE words themselves are the DOCTRINE—

That Jesus Christ is made unto us of God sanctification.

The word translated sanctification, is most commonly rendered in Scripture *holiness*, Rom. vi. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 15. Heb. xii. 14. Jesus Christ is made unto us of God, holiness; he is not only holy in himself, the *holy child* Jesus, Acts iv. 27, 30. nay, *most* holy, infinitely, eternally, and unchangeably holy; but he is *made holiness* to us, that is,

1. He is appointed of God to be the author of our sanctification, to work holiness in us for the making of us holy. As the efficient cause, as he is the Lord our righteousness, to make us righteous by imputation, so he is the Lord our holiness, to make us holy by implantation. We are justified, that is, accepted of as righteous in the sight of God, through his merit made ours. We are sanctified, that is, actually made holy, by his Spirit which is given to us, to abide with us for ever, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, sanctified by the Spirit of the Lord Jesus, Heb. ii. 11. Now the question is—Are ye glad to hear this, or no? Every one would be willing to be accepted as righteous, acquitted from guilt, but are you willing to be sanctified, to be made holy?

2. He is the pattern, the sample, the exemplary cause, of our sanctification. Holiness in us is the copy or transcript of the holiness that is in the Lord Jesus, John i. 16. As the wax hath line for line from the seal, the child limb for limb, feature for feature, from the father, so is holiness in us from Christ.—To be sanctified is to be made conformable to the image of Jesus Christ, Rom. viii. 29. It is to be made like him in heart and life; yet so, as that in three things there is a difference.

*He sanctified himself.* So do not we. We are sanctified by him, John xvii. 19. As he raised himself to life, so never did any other; but we are raised: it would have been long enough ere we should have made ourselves holy.

*He was originally holy*, never otherwise, not only as God, but as God-man, Luke i. 35. So are not we. We were unsanctified before we were sanctified, unholy before holy. So was not he.

*He is absolutely, universally, and completely holy.* He had the Spirit poured out upon him without measure. So have not we. Our sanctification, at the best in this life, is but imperfect. It is true there is a perfect day to come, and our light shines more and more towards it, but here below we have it not. Our wine is mixed with water; our gold with dross. So was not his.

For further clearing of this I shall show,

I. What sanctification is, or what it is to be sanctified.

II. That we have need of one to be made sanctification to us.

III. That Jesus Christ is made so, and how he sanctifies. And,

IV. What practical inferences are to be drawn from this subject.

I. and II. I shall join the two first together, by explaining what sanctification is, and by showing that we need one to be made sanctification to us.

To be sanctified is variously expressed, represented, and set forth, in the Scriptures.

1. It is to be renewed. Sanctification is the work of God's Spirit, whereby we are *renewed* in the whole

man after the image of God, Eph. iv. 22—34. It is the making of us now creatures, 2 Cor. v. 17. It is the changing of our very nature. We are by it made *partakers of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4.—a high expression. Now have we not need of one to do this for us? Can we do it for ourselves, or for one another? We cannot; therefore the great God hath undertaken it for us, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. And he doth perform it by Jesus Christ. To him, therefore, we must go.

2. It is to be regenerated, that is, born again, John iii. 3, 5. As sure as there is a first, there is a second, birth. Now, can we beget ourselves? We cannot. The second birth is from above; we are begotten of God, and born of God, 1 Pet. i. 3. John i. 13. Tit. iii. 5, 6.

3. It is to be raised from death to life; to be quickened, Eph. ii. 1. that is, sanctified. Sanctification is the first resurrection, Rev. xx. 6. Now, can a dead man raise himself to life again? Did ever any do it? He cannot. It is God alone that raises the dead. It is by Christ alone that dead souls are made alive. He is the resurrection and the life.

4. It is to be reconciled to God.—There is enmity, enmity ever since the fall, between God and man; mutual enmity. God an enemy to man, man an enemy to God, Zech. xi. 8. Rom. viii. 7. Now Jesus Christ as Mediator brings them together, and makes them friends, and he alone can do it.

He makes God a friend by dying; his death satisfied, and so pacified. He hath said, in him I am well pleased.

He makes us friends by sanctification, destroying the enmity—not all at once, but by degrees; and hath committed to us the ministry of reconciliation, 2 Cor. v. Is this reconciling work done with you?

5. It is to be converted. Sanctification is the same with conversion. It turns us about. We are born with our backs upon God and heaven, and our faces upon sin and hell, till grace comes, and that converts, turns, Acts iii. 19, 26. And we must be turning more and more all the days of our lives, Matt. xviii. 3. Luke xxii. 32. Now, can we turn ourselves? Have we not need of one to do it for us? Certainly we have, Jer. xxxi. 18. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God."

6. It is to be called with an effectual call. There is a common call, and there is an effectual call; it is the effectual call that is the same with sanctification, Rom. viii. 30. Now, calling is by another; we do not call ourselves; that other is Christ, 2 Tim. i. 9. Who called Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, and Zacchæus? Did not he?

7. It is to be changed, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Sanctification makes a great change; the judgment is changed, the disposition, the way, the company,—I am not I. It is a greater change that grace makes at conversion, than that death makes. At death grace is turned into glory, Job xiv. 14—change come; which is the turning of the same thing from a lower degree to a higher; but at conversion it is from sin to grace, between which there is no likeness.

8. It is to be cured. Sin is the sickness of the soul, a dangerous sickness, a mortal disease; though but few are sensible of it. Can we cure ourselves, or cure one another? No: the only physician is our Lord Jesus Christ, raised up of God for that purpose; no hand but his can heal us: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities: who healeth all thy diseases," Ps. ciii. 3. *forgiveth* in justification; *healeth* in sanctification; by degrees. "I will heal their backsliding," Hos. xiv. 4. heal their bent to backslide. Compare Hos. xi. 7. "My people are bent to backsliding from me."

9. It is to be cleansed. Sin is the pollution of the soul: and it is pollution in grain, such as nothing can wash us from but the fountain opened, and that fountain is Christ, Zech. xiii. 1. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you," Ezek. xxxvi. 25. This was fulfilled, when at their return from Babylon they were quite out of love with idols and idolatry, of which they were so fond before, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Eph. v. 25, 26.

10. It is to be clothed. A sinful condition is a naked condition, Rev. iii. 17. And what must poor naked souls do, but come to Christ, to his shop, and here buy of him white raiment? Rev. iii. 18. Zech. iii. 3, 4. "I clothed thee also with broidered work," &c. Ezek. xvi. 10—14. The prophet's statement is understood of their public privileges and advantages, above other people; but it is true also in a spiritual sense. Grace is rich raiment, princely, priestly, comely clothing, that waxeth not old.

11. It is to be consecrated. Sanctifying is the same with consecrating, that is, setting apart from common and profane to holy and spiritual uses, as persons, places, vessels, times, were under the Old Testament. In allusion to which, all true believers are a people sanctified, that is, set apart for God, separated from the world, and sin, and vanity, to be the Lord's peculiar; his temple; priests to him; anointed for that purpose, Ps. iv. 3. But,

III. How is Jesus Christ made all this to us? In what way, and by what means, doth he bring all this to pass in us and for us? That he doth it is plain in the text and elsewhere; but query, How?

1. Principally by the working of his Spirit and grace. The Spirit of Christ is the sanctifier. When he comes into the heart to dwell there, he renews, and he regenerates, and he raises, and he reconciles. The Father creates, the Son redeems, the Holy Ghost sanctifies, Tit. iii. 5, 6.—mark, *it is through Jesus*

*Christ.* If he had not satisfied and died, to make God friends with us, he would never have sent the Spirit, to make us friends with him. The sending of the Spirit to sanctify as well as to comfort us, is owing to the intercession of the Lord Jesus, John xiv. 16.

2. Instrumentally by the word, "Sanctify them through thy truth," John xvii. 17. Error never sanctifies. False doctrine, corrupt erroneous opinions, may prevail to bring people over to a party, but never to turn them from sin to God; to convert, regenerate, renew. Truth only doth that, Jam. i. 17. Tit. i. 1.

The word of truth begins, and the same carries on, this good work—As a word of conviction, of humiliation, of illumination, of regeneration, of faith, and of holiness, and therefore this should advance our esteem of the word of God, the written word, the word preached; and we should hear it accordingly, Ps. cxix. 9.

IV. The practical improvement.

1. Shall I propound one needful question to you? —Are ye sanctified? is Jesus Christ made of God sanctification to you? It is a thing that may be known. We may make our calling and our election sure; our election by our calling, by our sanctification; for to be sanctified is to be called, and to be called is to be sanctified: and not our election only, but our justification and our glorification may be made sure by it, Rom. viii. 30. And how sweet, how comfortable will that be! But how is this to be done? There are three marks:

(1.) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, it is become natural to us to walk in all holy obedience to the will of God. I say natural, not to the old, but to the new, nature. Now what is done naturally is done freely—as water from a spring, Ps. cx. 3. —easily, 1 John v. 3.—delightfully, John iv. 34.— and evenly, and constantly, and perseveringly. Fire always burns, stones always tend downwards, because their nature is so. Thus it is with the old nature in sinning, Jer. vi. 7. and thus it is with the new nature in obeying, John iv. 14.

Then, says one, I fear I am not sanctified.

I reply, The trial is not to be made by any one single action at any one time, but by our course and way. How is it *ordinarily* with us? There is no man but doth something that beasts do; but is he therefore a beast? There is no beast but doth something that a man doth; but is he therefore a man?

(2.) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, holiness is highly prized and dearly loved, and more and more of it earnestly desired. I believe it is never otherwise among the truly sanctified. Now, is it so with us? We love civility, and moral honesty, and temperance, and sobriety. So doth many a one that hates holiness.

(3.) Where Christ is made to us sanctification, he is owned and acknowledged as our all in all. The crown is set upon his head. We rejoice in Christ Jesus. To us to live is Christ. All the sanctified are brought by their sanctification to Christ.—They were strangers to him before, but now they are friends.

2. Shall I suppose you now propounding to me another needful question,—What may I do that Christ may be made to me sanctification?

(1.) We must be inwardly and thoroughly convinced that there is an absolute necessity he should be so. This must be the case,

*If we mean to please God in this world.*—None but the sanctified are accepted of him. He hath no pleasure but where his image is, and his likeness is. Our sacrifices are an abomination, our prayers an abomination, otherwise. Till the tree is good the fruit cannot be good. And also,

*If we mean to enjoy God in the other world.*—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. that is, see him so as to enjoy him. It is the *pure in heart* who shall see God, Matt. v. 8. Heaven would not be heaven to an unsanctified soul, if we might suppose such a one admitted there. Now are we convinced of this? "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," John iii. 3, 5. When Christ thus discoursed to Nicodemus, he was offended. It may be, so may some of you.—How can this be? But "Verily, verily, I say unto you," must silence all objections.

(2.) We must apply ourselves to the Lord Jesus by faith and prayer.

*By faith:* closing with him, not only as the Lord our righteousness, but as the Lord our holiness. Not only as our only justifier by his merit, but as our only sanctifier by his Spirit.

*By prayer:* calling on him. Lord, if ever thou wilt do any thing for me, sanctify me, Ps. li. 10. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, should be ours for ourselves, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," 1 Thess. v. 23. So should Christ's prayer, John xvii. 17, "Sanctify them through thy truth."

(3.) We must attend upon the ordinances. These are the conduit pipes through which the grace of sanctification is conveyed to poor souls.

3. Shall I suppose you now propounding one question more,—What must they do to whom Christ is already made sanctification?

(1.) They have cause to bless God for it every day, all their days, Ps. ciii. 1—3.

(2.) They must press after further degrees of sanctification, more and more. Dying to sin. Living to righteousness.

(3.) They must promote the sanctification of others also.

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## SERMON XXX.

### CHRIST IS OUR SUPPLY.

PHIL. iv. 19.

*But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

DOCT. That the supply of all our needs is only from God, and only by Jesus Christ.

That is as much as to say, that Jesus Christ alone is our supply. Can you readily turn to a more sweet, comfortable text of Scripture than this is in all your Bibles, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation.

*Supplies* we would have, and here they are for us.

Supplies to *all* our needs; not some, but all.

And that from *God—My God* shall supply. Paul's God was the same that we call our God—Jehovah, blessed for ever. He says, *My* God, because he had supplied him, and his God would.

*According to his riches in glory;* that is, in such a manner, measure, and degree as becomes him. Not what is fit for us poor worms to receive, but what is fit for him to give.

And all this in and by and *through Jesus Christ.* Without him no supply is to be had to any of our needs. We might have starved, and died, and perished eternally, but for him; he himself is our supply.

Show, I. What our *needs* are, and what it is that he supplies us with.

II. What are the properties of this supply.

III. What special resemblances there are of it.

IV. What practical inferences are to be drawn from the whole.

I. What are our needs, and with what does the Lord Christ supply us?

There are seven things that we have need of, and there is supply to be had for them all in Jesus Christ, some pertaining to life, some to godliness, 2 Pet. i. 3.

1. Righteousness and strength.

*Righteousness.* They that have none have need; *There is none righteous, no not one,* Rom. iii. 10. We have to do with a righteous God, and a righteousness must be had, or there is no standing before him. Ho! where shall we have it? Of our own we have it not, nor hath any creature in heaven or earth wherewithal to supply us. It is to be had only in and by Jesus Christ. He is the *Lord our righteousness,* Jer. xxiii. 6. He is made unto us of God righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. Our God hath supplied our need of this in his Son; Dan. ix. 24. *He hath brought in everlasting righteousness.* To him, therefore, we must go; plead his righteousness for the forgiveness of our sins; the merit of his death, his righteousness, for the acceptation of our performances.

*Strength.* They that are weak have need. Of what? Of strength. Now we are all weak, weak as water. Weak as sinners; how weak is thy heart! Weak as saints; under manifold infirmities. Weak to resist temptations, to bear afflictions, to perform duties. What shall we do? My God shall supply. Jehovah-Jireh—God will provide; nay, he has provided, "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Rom. v. 6. Have they need of strength? I will die and purchase it for them. So that now the believer may say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Phil. iv. 13. See both these together, Isa. xlv. 24. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength."

2. Mercy and grace.

*Mercy* to pardon. This we are, or should be, calling for every day, Ps. li. 1; lvi. 1. for certainly we have need, whether we feel our need or no. Now have we any hope? Will our God supply us? He will, *through Jesus Christ,* but not otherwise. Out of him there is no mercy. The mercy of God is, therefore, called the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ,* Jude 21. because our supplies of it are only in, and by, and through him.

*Grace.* Hast thou no need of grace, quickening grace, preventing grace, renewing grace, assisting grace? They that think they have no need have most need of all. Now, where is it to be had? *My God shall supply,* but it must be through Jesus Christ, "Of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace," John i. 16. Compare this with Col. i. 19. "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Away to him then, that is, to God by him. See both together in one scripture, Heb. iv. 16. "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

3. Peace and comfort. I mean that which is inward; peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost. Do ye want it any of you? Many who do, think they do not, mistaking false peace of their own speaking to themselves for the true peace. Away with that, and come to Christ for the true peace, for that which he calls *his* peace, John xiv. 27—*my* peace. If he speak peace no matter who speaks trouble; if he troubles no matter who speaks peace, Eph. ii. 14.—*he is our peace.*

4. Food and raiment. Under these two are comprehended all the necessaries of life, and sometimes under one of them—bread; *Give us this day our daily bread.* Now have we no need of these? We all have, we cannot live without them, without daily

supplies of them; and whence are they to be had? Jehovah-jireh—my God shall supply; but it is only by and through Jesus Christ. He bought every meal's meat for us, and every suit of clothes for us, or we had never had either, and, therefore, to him we must have recourse every day. In all our needs, even of these things, we should say, Lord Jesus, feed me, clothe me, to-day. Hath he ever yet failed you? Luke xxii. 35.

5. Protection from enemies, bodily and ghostly; our great adversary, the devil, and all our little adversaries. They would swallow us up every day, if our God did not watch over us, if the blessed Jesus were not our shield. Our enemy sickness would destroy our health, our enemy pain our ease, our enemies the caterpillars, and the locusts, and the palmer-worms, all the increase of our fields; the murrain our cattle, the fire our houses; but he preserves and keeps us, Psalm cxxi. So likewise for public enemies.

6. A guard through death. We must all shortly, in the order in which God hath appointed, take our turn through the darksome valley; and dare we venture alone, without a convoy? There is no safe convoy but Jesus Christ, Ps. xxiii. 4. His presence with us, will bring us safe through, else we perish, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. It is he alone that can make a lane through this Red sea, this Jordan. Jordan's rough, said a dying person, often repeating it, Jordan's rough. It may be, we may find it so, but the winds and the seas obey *him*.

7. A guide to glory. Shall we be supplied with this also? Never fear it, if Christ be ours, Ps. lxxiii. 24. "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death," Ps. xlviii. 14.—beyond death. Not only to death, and through death, but beyond death. Compare Ps. cxxi. 1. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,"—beyond the hills,—"from whence cometh my help."

II. What kind of supplies are to be had for poor needy souls with Jesus Christ?

1. Rich supplies. *My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches.* A rich God gives rich supplies. He is rich in mercy, pardoning mercy, Ps. lxxxvi. 5. Therefore, he multiplies to pardon great sins. He is rich in grace, 1 Pet. v. 10. the God of all grace; therefore he gives *liberally*, 2 Cor. ix. 9. He is rich in comfort, the God *of all comfort*, 2 Cor. i. 3. God *who comforts*, 2 Cor. vii. 6. Therefore he makes the consolations of his people oftentimes to abound; not only full, but running over; "I can hold no more."*

2. Ready supplies. We need not go far for them, they are always at hand; the word is nigh thee. Other friends that should supply our needs are many times at a distance, afar off, and either know them not, or do know them, but cannot send to us. But there is nothing of that here. Our heavenly Father knows what we want, and whenever he pleases to supply, the way is short. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, we may hear and receive from the blessed Jesus in heaven, Ps. xlvi. 1—11.

3. Glorious supplies—according to his riches in *glory*. That is glorious that is singular and superlative, such as makes him famous and renowned whose it is; now such fame, such great fame, is our Lord's. His supplies are such as he is worthy to be praised for, his supplies of mercy and grace. How many thousands in heaven, how many thousands on earth, are blessing him for these;—"Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever," Phil. iv. 20. They put a glory also upon them that have them, making them famous, as Manasseh, Mary Magdalen, Paul, being pardoned sinners.

4. Gradual supplies. We are not supplied with every thing all at once, but now with one thing, then with another; now in a lower, after in a higher, degree, Prov. iv. 18. A converted person no sooner hath a grain of grace, but his good will would immediately be perfect in grace; no sooner is he comforted a little, but presently he would have full assurance. Not so; soft and fair; when out of Egypt, you are not forthwith in Canaan. You must be willing to receive supplies as God is pleased to communicate them.

5. Universal supplies: *all* your needs.

But is there any more than one thing needful?

There is only one main thing chiefly and principally needful, but that one thing branches itself out into many things. Lo, there are in Christ supplies for all; all persons, at all times, in all things.

6. Undeserved supplies. There is nothing in us to merit any good thing at God's hands. Whatever we would have, we must sue for it as a beggar for an alms. If a beggar be blind, sick, sore, naked, dumb, old, his blindness, sickness, his disease, his nakedness, his want of speech, his age, speak for him, not in a way of merit, but as a meet object for mercy to work upon: so it is here. Our spiritual maladies bespeak us fit objects of mercy—but they surely lay no claim to it.

7. Covenant supplies, made over to us by promise: and he is faithful, that hath promised.

8. Constant supplies; daily, duly, for ever.

III. What resemblances are there of this?

We see it illustrated,

1. As the heavens supply the earth. The earth would be a barren, useless thing, if it were not for what the heavens supply it with every day, in daily influences; the warmth it has is from above; the

* "Sir," said the eminently holy Mr. John Janeway to a reverend divine who discoursed with him, in his last illness, on the excellency of Christ, and the glory of the invisible world, "I feel something of it. My heart is as full as it can hold in this lower state. I can hold no more here. O that I could but let you know what I feel." Clarke's Lives, fol. 1683. p. 77.

moisture, and thence comes its fruitfulness; Hos. ii. 21. "I will hear the earth," therefore the earth must call.—We are the earth, earthly; the heavens are Christ, heavenly; unless he supply us with warmth, moisture, sunshine, rain, what are we? Hos. vi. 3. But then he must hear us, hear from us. We should be crying, calling, Help, Lord.

2. As the earth supplies the inhabitants. The earth is not our mother only, but our nurse. We were not only made out of it, but we are maintained by it, Eccl. v. 9. Thence we have all our corn, wine, oil, hemp, flax,—to feed, to clothe us. A good nurse gives abundance of milk. Now as the earth nourishes and maintains all that live upon it, high and low, rich and poor, so it is with Jesus Christ. As we live by him, so we live upon him. But then as to this also, the earth must hear the corn, and the corn hear Jezreel, Hos. ii. 22. There must be asking by prayer; *seeking* in the use of means; *knocking* by importunity; and persevering in both.

3. As the head supplies the members. The head is the treasure of the body, wherein the spirits are lodged and laid up for the use of the body; and thence it is that all the members are supplied, and when they fail the body languishes and dies. So all believers; from Christ their head, having union with him, receive vital influences—righteousness, and strength, and grace, and peace, and comfort, and quickening, in want of which they are weak, and can do nothing, John xv. 5.

4. As the root supplies the branches. In the root of a tree the sap is lodged, and laid up for the use of the tree; thence it moves up into the branches, little and big, and the sap they receive is that which nourishes and feeds, and makes them grow and bring forth fruit. So all believers receive from Christ. He is our root, John xv. 4, 5.

5. As the sun supplies the stars; the stars have no light of their own, nor the moon neither, no more than a clod of earth, further than the sun shining upon them puts light into them. Their light is a borrowed light. So is all the spiritual light that we have—knowledge, grace, comfort—borrowed from Christ.

6. As the sea supplies the rivers, Eccl. i. 7. They come from it, they return to it. So the glory of all our receivings every day from Jesus Christ, should return to him again, in thankful acknowledgments.

7. As the fountain supplies the cisterns. The cisterns are often emptying, the bowls emptying: away to the well daily. So, in this case, Christ is our fountain.

8. As the store-chamber supplies the family. It is said concerning Joseph, that he built store-houses, and there he lodged the corn, and thence the people had it as they needed. Our store-house is Jesus Christ. There God the Father hath lodged and laid up a fulness for us. Therefore, to him we must go And may we hope to speed? Never fear it: My God *shall* supply—he *shall*—observe with what confidence he speaks it.

IV. The practical improvement.

1. Beg of God this day to make you sensible of your needs: multitudes are not, Rev. iii. 17. We do not look into our souls, turn our eyes inward, and that is the reason. Beg the eye-salve, Rev. iii. 18. For "he hath filled the hungry with good things," Luke i. 53.

2. Believe the truth of this saying of Paul's; he was not hired to proclaim that which is not, to deceive people. It is a real truth, *My God shall supply all your need.*—Ps. xxiii. 1.

3. Have recourse to the blessed Jesus; tell him what thy need is—mercy, grace, righteousness.

4. Acknowledge him in all supplies.

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## SERMON XXXI.

### CHRIST IS OUR RESURRECTION.

JOHN xi. 25, 26.

*Jesus said unto her,* I AM THE RESURRECTION, *and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.*

HERE we have it from the mouth of the Lord Jesus himself, and he having spoken it we may safely believe and assert, and make a DOCTRINE of it,—

That Jesus Christ is the *resurrection* to true believers.

Show, I. How we are to understand this.

II. What proof there is of it.

III. How we are to improve it.

I. How are we to understand this—*I am the resurrection?* There is a three-fold resurrection, and Jesus Christ is all the three to true believers.

1. There is *spiritual* resurrection; which is, the raising of the soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is called the first resurrection, for so I think we are to understand that passage, Rev. xx. 6. All that are made truly holy, by the renewing, sanctifying grace of God, are certainly thereby delivered from the second death, that is, from burning in hell for ever. Now all true believers have this holiness wrought in them; and how, but by Jesus Christ? When he is made unto us *sanctification*, then he is thus made unto us *resurrection*, Eph. ii. 1. It is his voice that opens the grave and fetches us out; he says unto us, Live; and we live, and the time is a time of love. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live," John v. 25.—and *now* is;

then, at that very time. There was a present resurrection, in the conversion of divers that left all, and followed him. No less than almighty power can do this, can bring to pass such a wonderful change.

Examine, inquire, brethren, Are ye thus raised again. Are ye *passed from death to life?* There is such a thing, and it may be known, and we can have no comfort in living the life of nature, if we be not spiritually alive, if we do not live the life of grace.

Now one good mark to know it by is,—the *end* that we live to. Whether is that—God, or self? Do we live to God, or to ourselves? Rom. vi. 11.

Another, is by the *food* that we live upon. Is that Christ? Phil. i. 21.—his merit and righteousness for justification, his spirit and grace for sanctification?

Another is, by the *rule* that we live by. Is that the rule of the new creature—the word of God? Is that the card and compass we sail by, the light and lamp we walk by? or, is it something else—the distates of our own corrupt nature, carnal reason, fleshly appetites, the course and custom of this vain world? Try by this.

Let me exhort you. Would you have Christ this resurrection to you? Close immediately with the gospel call; stand it out no longer against the voice, entreating—beseeching. As soon as ever Christ said to Lazarus, *Come forth*, presently Lazarus came forth, without ifs or ands, without making objections. How, you ask, can I that am dead stir? No, though you are as he was with the grave-clothes about him, yet he that was dead came forth. So I address you —" Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14.

2. There is a *figurative* resurrection; and that is, the raising of a person, or people, from an exceeding, low, miserable, afflicted, helpless condition, to a state of comfort and joy, peace and safety. Such a thing there is, and it is a resurrection. There is something in it, like to a resurrection, Hos. vi. 1, 2.—when smitten and torn, reckoned as dead; when delivered, and recovered, and settled again, reckoned as raised again. Read Ezek. xxxvii. That valley of dead and dry bones, was the nation and people of the Jews, in the time of their captivity in Babylon, where they lay past all hope, till the end of the seventy years, and then, by a proclamation from Cyrus, they were released, and it was like a kind of a resurrection. It is in like manner with them at this day, and hath been for near seventeen hundred years,—a scattered, broken, miserable people. There is a time, we hope, at hand, when God will gather them again, that there may be one sheep-fold, as there is one Shepherd. Now, how is that time called? Resurrection time, Rom. xi. 15.—life from the dead —Once more: The condition of many ministers and people amongst ourselves, of many in France, hath been, in outward appearance, a dead condition. The words of the Act* are, that they shall be as if naturally dead; but, blessed be God, there hath been a resurrection, in some measure, a coming out of the grave again, of which, whoever was the instrument, the Lord Jesus himself was the principal agent. He is the resurrection to us. When a company of nonconformists went to court, to congratulate the king and queen, and to thank them for the present liberty, being clothed alike in long black cloaks, such as ministers usually wear in London, a scoffer said, Whither are all these going, to a burial? No, Sir, said one of them, to a resurrection.† It is so, likewise, in reference to personal deliverances from personal calamities, as Isaac, when bound and laid on the altar, Heb. xi. 19. It was Paul's case, 2 Cor. i. 8—10. Hath not Jesus Christ, in this sense, been the resurrection many a time to thee, and to me? We were brought low, and he helped us. Was not Job's restoration a resurrection? so some understand Job xix. 25, 26.

Learn hence, on whom to depend, and to whom to fly, in such cases; even to the blessed Jesus.

Learn also, to whom to give the praise of such a resurrection, public or personal; even to the same.

3. There is a *proper* resurrection, and that is, the raising up of the dead bodies, properly, naturally dead, out of which the life and the soul is departed. And is Jesus Christ that too? He is. That is chiefly meant here. The text was spoken to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, upon occasion of raising her brother to life again, after he had been dead four days. Now, as to this, Jesus Christ is the resurrection three ways:

(1.) As he was the only one that ever raised himself to life again: no one ever did it but he. (It is not with us in the sleep of death as it is in the death of sleep, when we have slept enough we wake of ourselves. No; the human body must be waked.) And therefore, as in some places it is said, God raised him from the dead, so in other places it is said, He rose again on the third day; making it his own act and deed, 1 Cor. xv. 4. He had two natures, the divine, and human. His human nature could never have raised itself; no, his divine nature raised his human nature. Christ, as God, raised himself as man.

(2.) As by his power alone it was that all were raised that ever were raised; all under the Old Testament, all under the New. Though himself in his own proper person, raised three only; the ruler's daughter, newly dead; the widow's son, upon the bier; Lazarus, buried; yet all that ever any of the prophets raised, or that ever any of the apostles

* The Act of Uniformity, 13 and 14. Chas. II. c. 4.

† A similar anecdote, and probably originating in it, is related of the Rev. Thomas Bradbury, in the reign of King George I. See Wilson's Hist. of Dissenting Churches, v. 3. 514.

raised, they raised in his name, not in their own; by a power derived from him, not by any power of their own: allude to Acts iii. 12, 16.

(3.) As to the day of the great resurrection at the end of the world, when all the dead shall be raised. It will be done only by the power of the Lord Jesus, especially as to true believers; the raising of them will in a special manner be his doing. And as to this it is that he is the *resurrection.*

II. Let us consider the proof of this.

1. It is certain there is to be such a thing. As sure as we must die, we shall live again; go to the grave, and come out again. But Job asks, "If a man die shall he live again?" Job xiv. 14. I answer,—Not a life of opportunity again. There have been, and there are, those that deny this; old Sadducees, new Sadducees, 1 Cor. xv. 12. 2 Tim. ii. 18. I shall give no other proof at present but that of our Lord Jesus, Matt. xxii. 23—34. Therefore Abraham was alive—in soul—but the soul of Abraham was not Abraham, therefore his body must live too.—Can this be? Yes, easily, to almighty power.

2. For the manner of it, how it is to be, God hath revealed it to his holy apostles, else we could not have known it:—"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

*The Lord himself shall descend.* This Lord is the Lord Jesus Christ, and no other. The Father hath committed it wholly into his hand. He is the resurrection: the same that ascended, the same shall also descend. He descended once in rags of flesh, but when he shall descend the second time, it will be in robes of glory.

There will be a *great shout,* the *voice of the archangel,* that is, of Christ himself. We never read of more than one archangel, the Lord of the angels. *And the trump of God.*—Trumpets were used in calling of assemblies. So here—the greatest of assemblies that ever was. They are used at the assizes, when the judges are going to the bench. So here—This was the trumpet that Jerome * said was always sounding in his ears.

*The dead in Christ shall rise first*—either, the dead for Christ, the martyrs, before other saints—or, the dead in Christ, that is, all true believers, before the rest of mankind. Those who lived and died in true union with him by faith, which union still remained even when dead; or, before those that shall then be found alive.

And what then? *Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up, &c.* This is the short account the Scriptures give us concerning this matter; and we are bound to believe, without doubting or wavering, that so it shall be.

Read to the same purpose, but more fully, 1 Cor. xv. It is the scope of the whole chapter. Where the apostle,

(1.) Positively asserts and proves that there is to be such a thing, that all true believers must and shall certainly rise again at the last day. See one of his arguments, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," *v.* 19.

(2.) Plainly lays the ground of it upon Christ's being made the resurrection to them. If he be risen, then they shall rise. But he is risen; therefore believers shall rise.

The consequence he proves,

From their union with him. He is the head, they the members. It is a real union, 1 Cor. xv. 15. If the body of one saint were lost, there would be a maim in Christ's mystical body.—Therefore it is said we shall be changed, that of the same metal our glorious body may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. It is said also, that the head and members shall be together in the same place, John xvii. 24.

He is the first-fruits; they the lump, 1 Cor. xv. 20. Lev. xxiii. 10, 11. Read Deut. xxvi. 1, &c. It is a relative union.

He is the second Adam; they the children descended from him, 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. This is another relative union.—He proves it also,

From the victory that he hath obtained over every thing that might hinder; sin, death, the grave, the devil, 1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Is not Christ the resurrection to unbelievers, must not they rise also?

They must rise; but neither by virtue of any union they have with him, nor any victory he hath obtained for them. The devil is not against the rising of the wicked; he doth nothing to oppose or hinder it; he would have their souls and bodies to come together again, in order to their being tormented together. The grave is free to part with them for the same reason. But they would hinder the rising of the godly. Aye, but they shall not, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. The wicked are raised by the power of Christ, in order to condemnation; but the righteous by their union with Christ: the one in wrath, the other in love, John v. 28, 29. The righteous to be married—crowned; the wicked to be executed.

3. He declares, also, with what kind of bodies they shall be raised: the self-same in substance, Job xix. 26. but greatly changed in qualities; no defect, no deformity. If scars have been received in suffering, they are not to disgrace, but to honour them. They shall be made like Christ's body; either

* A celebrated father of the church. He died A. D. 420.

that, Matt. xvii. 1, 2. or that, Acts i. 9—11. or that, Rev. i. 13—16. In particular, see 1 Cor. xv. 35—38, 42—44. Their bodies shall be made spiritual, immortal, incorruptible, powerful, able to attend the soul in all its actings and operations, without weariness: not as here below; but able to bear up all that weight of glory which is prepared. In a word, have you seen the body of the sun in its noonday brightness, such a light as you are not able to behold? Then you have seen something like it. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars;" but it is said in Matt. xiii. 43. "They shall shine forth as the sun."

III. The improvement.

1. That of the apostle, 1 Thess. iv. 15. "Wherefore comfort one another." It is a thing that the servants of the Lord should be often talking of one to another, for the comforting and encouraging one of another. If one another, sure ourselves much more. This should be done,

*Under bodily blemishes and infirmities:*—they shall shortly be done away.

*Against fears of death and the grave:*—it is but unclothing us to put on better—the grave is as the refiner's furnace.

*Against inordinate sorrow at the death of godly friends*, John xi. 23. 1 Thess. iv. 13. They are not dead, but asleep—as when we take leave over-night.

2. That of the same apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 58. "Be ye stedfast,"—it may be rendered, *Exhort one another*,—"unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

A notable spur to all manner of duty in general—to abound therein. It will certainly not be in vain.

In particular—to serve God with our bodies, 1 Cor. vi. 14, 15—not to serve the devil and lust, and sin with them.

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## SERMON XXXII.

### CHRIST IS OUR REDEMPTION.

1 Cor. i. 30.

*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us redemption.*

The words themselves are the DOCTRINE—

That Jesus Christ is made of God unto all them that are in him *redemption.*

Show, I. What this means.

II. What kind of redemption.

III. What the duty is that it calls for from us.

I. What does this mean,—"made redemption?" You may think we had this before, when it was showed that he is made freedom to us, from John viii. 36.* But you will see presently that there is something else meant by it.

He is made of God redemption to us; that is, God hath ordained and appointed him from all eternity, and in the fulness of time raised him up, and sent him, to be the author and procurer of redemption for us; or, which is all one, to be a redeemer to us. So that if asked, what did Jesus Christ come into the world to do? We answer, to redeem us. They are the first words of Zechariah's song, Luke i. 68.

Now to redeem is, in general, to recover those that are in bondage out of bondage. As suppose one rowing in a galley under the Turks, is rescued (which may be done three ways, besides that of voluntary discharge and dismission)—as the Jews were released by Cyrus out of their captivity in Babylon, he may be said to be redeemed. Redemption, viz.

1. By power; when those who kept us in bondage are conquered and overcome.

2. By exchange; when one prisoner is let go for another.

3. By price; when a sum of money is paid to buy off a prisoner, more or less, according as the quality of the prisoner is. Now this last is properly redemption, and this last is the way in which Jesus Christ hath made us free. He hath bought us out of the hands of divine justice, by laying down a ransom for us.

If you ask what that was? I answer, that sometimes it is said to be his life, Matt. xx. 28. sometimes himself, 1 Tim. ii. 6. and sometimes his blood, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. These three come to the same. We are redeemed by Christ dying for us, shedding his blood, laying down his life, offering up himself. This fully satisfied the demands of God's justice. Let me have this, saith he, and I have enough. I expect no more by way of satisfaction for the sin of man. I am well pleased, atoned, reconciled, made friends. To this purpose we are told of a covenant of redemption which was transacted from all eternity between the Father and the Son, the terms whereof were—That if the Son would come and be man and die, that dying of his should be accepted as the price or ransom of all the elect, how many soever there were. The Son accepted of this motion, did what was to be done, suffered what was to be suffered, and so became our redemption. See some footsteps of this covenant transaction in two scriptures, Ps. xl. 6—8. Isa. xlix. 2, 6, 9. But,

II. What kind of redemption is this?

1. Needed redemption. It is the redemption that we needed. He came to supply all our needs. Now

* See Discourse XV.

mong other needs, being in bondage, we needed ne to redeem us: not only one to clothe us, being aked; to feed us being hungry; to wash us, being lthy; to heal us being wounded; to cure us, being ck;—but to redeem us. If he had done all this for s in our bondage, and left us still in bondage, we ad been miserable notwithstanding. Therefore, he omes and buys our freedom, pays our ransom. We ere God's prisoners, and the devil was the gaoler. Ve were left in his hand, under his power, and his we ust have been for ever, but for Christ the Redeemer.

2. It is a nonesuch redemption, when compared ith other redemption. Whether personal, as Joseph it of prison, or Peter, Acts xii. or Daniel, out of ie lions' den. Whether public; as from Egypt, om Babylon. It surpasses them all in number, ay, and consequences.

3. Distinguishing redemption. It is the redemption iat others needed, as well as we, but it is denied ) them, and granted to us, therefore, I must call it istinguishing redemption.

It is denied to the angels that sinned. They had s much need as we, for they are in bondage as well s we; under God's wrath and curse as well as we; ay, before we were; but he took not on him the ature of angels: the commons are ransomed, the obles left behind. He paid no price to redeem iem. As that tree fell so it lies, and must lie for ver.

It is denied to the greatest part of mankind, as to ie saving benefit and efficacy of it: the elect reap ie benefit absolutely, others conditionally, yet there ; no collusion, because the decree is secret; for ultitudes there are that know nothing of it, and of iose few that do multitudes reject and slight it, and re never the better for it: Rev. v. 9. "*Redeemed to God out of* every kindred, and tongue, and people, nd nation." How should we then adore, and admire! "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyelf unto us and not unto the world?" John xiv. 22.

4. It is divers, manifold redemption according to ie manifold evils that we lay under. They are of iree sorts—temporal, spiritual, eternal.

(1.) He is redemption to us from temporal evils. uch as concern the body, and the life that now is; uch as sickness, death, poverty. Not that they hall not befall us—for they do, and all things come like to all, redeemed and unredeemed. But, that ey shall not hurt us. The sting of them is taken ut, Ps. xci. 10. No evil things befall. There is o curse attends them, Gal. iii. 13. Were this ightly understood, and duly made use of, it were he sweetest argument imaginable, both against ears of temporal calamities before they come, Job . 19. And the best against inordinate dejections nd despondencies when they are come. But,

(2.) Which is better, it is redemption to us from piritual evils. These are worse evils than the former, because they affect the better part of us, which is our souls; them first and immediately, but not them only, but our bodies also. I shall mention two only:

The *guilt of sin*; whereby we are bound over to punishment, the fear whereof causes bondage, Heb. ii. 14. To redeem us from this, he is made righteousness to us for our justification, that is, for our discharge from that guilt, for the forgiveness of all our sins, and the accepting of us as righteous. This is an unspeakable blessing and benefit, and it is made over to all the Lord's redeemed ones, who are now to reckon themselves at peace with God, Rom. v. 1.

The *filth and power of sin*; whereby sin hath dominion over us, and we are perfect slaves to it, the vilest of slaves, John viii. 34. To redeem us from this he is made sanctification to us; he sends his Spirit into the heart, who renews and regenerates, turns the man from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, enabling him to die to sin more and more, and to live to righteousness more and more. This he doth as a Redeemer, and is doing; it is called *redeeming* us, Tit. ii. 14. *By redeeming from all iniquity*, the apostle doth not there mean from the guilt and punishment of it only, but from the power and dominion of it, from the love and liking of it. It is the same with *purifying*. These two, justification and sanctification, are never parted, Ps. ciii. 3. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

(3.) There is another sort of evils yet, and those are eternal evils; and by redemption here we are especially to understand our deliverance from those.

Because it is mentioned after righteousness and sanctification, as a thing different from them. And

Because of what we find in other scriptures, where redemption is applied to something in the other world: "Waiting for the redemption of the body," Rom. viii. 23. that is, the resurrection and glorification of our bodies: compare Luke xxi. 28. with Eph. iv. 30. *the day of redemption*. This is certainly some day yet to come, when the work of our redemption shall be fully finished, the top-stone laid; for hitherto, as we see and know but in part, so we are redeemed but in part. In Heb. ix. 12. it is called *eternal* redemption. Our present redemption by Christ is eternal in the design and tendency of it, it is in order to eternity; but that to come is eternal in regard of the eternal evils it frees us from, and the eternal happiness it puts us into possession of, when it shall be accomplished, and Jesus Christ is made all that to us.

Taking it in this sense, I shall show,

1. What those eternal evils are which redemption frees us from.

(1.) It frees us for ever, not only from the guilt, and filth, and power of sin, but from the very being of it also. It must not only no longer have a throne in us, as at conversion, but not so much as a seat

or place in us, and that for ever. And are ye not glad at the very thought of this? Nay, it frees us from all possibility of sinning to eternity. Adam had no sin, but a possibility of sin he had, and so it appeared, for he did sin. Paul groaned for this, Rom. vii. 24.

(2.) It frees us from Satan ever having any more to do with us, either as a tempter or as a tormentor. He is busy now with the saved, 1 Pet. v. 8. and he will be more busy hereafter with those that perish, Matt. xviii. 34. But where the redeemed are he comes not, Rom. xvi. 20.

(3.) It frees us from all sorrow and suffering, of what kind soever, in mind or body. All tears shall be wiped away, there shall be no weeping, nor wailing, nor gnashing of teeth; no fire, no worm, no brimstone, no darkness. These are the portion of the damned, not of the redeemed, Rev. xxi. 4.

(4.) It frees us from all society with wicked and ungodly men, and that for ever. They are blended here, and it pleases neither, Ps. cxx. 5, 6. But there is a redemption coming, Matt. xxv. 33. All this happiness you say a stone hath, no sin,—no sorrow,—therefore I shall show,

2. What there is that is positive in this redemption.

(1.) As soon as the redeemed die, (for die they must, even as others: Jesus Christ hath not redeemed us from dying,) their souls immediately go to God, to the vision and fruition of him in glory, Luke xxiii. 43. Phil. i. 23. It grieves me and shames me that I can speak with no more sense and savour of these things. Such apprehensions as a child prior to its birth hath of this world, such we have of the world to come.

(2.) At the resurrection, at the last day, the same soul and the same body shall come together again. Though we are not redeemed from death, we are to be from the grave; not from going down into it, but from being held by it, Isa. xxvi. 19. Hos. xiii. 14. Nay, not raised only, but raised incorruptible and immortal; glorious, like Christ's glorified body.

(3.) To all eternity there shall be a fulness of uninterrupted joy and felicity; a remaining rest; a sabbath without a week of working days after it, perpetual, eternal. Lo, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. It is a happiness such as the infinite love and wisdom of the great God could contrive, and the infinite love and power of the great God could effect and perform, on the behalf of a remnant, whom his delight was to honour. Read Esther vi. 6—9. But that was a poor honour in comparison with this honour.

3. I shall show how Jesus Christ is made this to us, this future redemption.

He is the purchaser of it; it was bought with his blood, bought back. We had mortgaged it for an apple, and must never have retrieved it, had not he died, Eph. i. 14. It is redeemed for us, and we are redeemed for it.

He is our forerunner in it, Heb. vi. 20. He went thither as our attorney or proxy, to take possession of the purchase in our name and stead, John xiv. 1, 2.

It is he that himself actually puts us into possession of it.

When we die the angels are his messengers, sent by him to convey us into Abraham's bosom.

At the resurrection it is his voice and trumpet that raises the dead; *he* is the *resurrection*.

At the judgment he is the Judge, the sentence is from him; Come, ye blessed.

It is he himself alone that is the sole object of all our future happiness; to be with *him*, to see and enjoy *him*, is our future redemption, Rev. xxi. 23.

III. The improvement,

1. Then it concerns us all, by all means, to give all diligence to make sure to ourselves our interest in this redemption.

It is certain all are not thus redeemed; abundance of mankind miscarry and perish.

It is certain those that do are miserable creatures, and will be so to all eternity.

Those will be most miserable that were once in a fair possibility of being saved, and yet missed; therefore, I beg of you, for the Lord's sake, and for your own souls' sake, look about you.

Now those to whom Christ is made redemption are such, and none but *such, as are in him*. Are ye in him, grafted into him, by a lively faith? Have ye his spirit?

Those to whom Christ is made redemption are such, and none but such, to whom he is made *wisdom*, and *righteousness*, and *sanctification*. Hath he been these to you? If so, the redemption is yours. Is he your *wisdom*? have ye left the follies of sin and chosen wisely? Is he your *righteousness*? have ye called him by that name, and renounced your own merits? Is he your *sanctification*? are ye new creatures?

2. If Jesus Christ be made of God this redemption to you, then, in God's name, take the comfort of it. Lift up the head and hands that hang down; *rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice*. Were there but a small portion of worldly happiness made sure to us in reversion, after a few years in this world; were we sure of some great lordship, with the appurtenances of it; our thoughts would be running upon it, we should solace ourselves in the foretaste of it; and lo, heaven itself made ours will not keep us from drooping! It is our unbelief that hinders our joy.

3. Then live as the redeemed of the Lord. Live.

With your eye upon the redemption: be viewing it often, aiming at it as your scope, 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Live with your hand upon the plough; abounding always in the work of the Lord, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Live with your feet upon the world; despising its glories, bearing patiently its frowns, Heb. x. 34.

Live with your heart upon the Redeemer; in love and thankfulness, Ps. cvii. 1, 2.

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## SERMON XXXIII.

### CHRIST IS OUR LESSON.

EPH. iv. 20.

*But ye have not so learned Christ.*

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is the *lesson* that we are to learn.

Show, I. The meaning of this.

II. What kind of lesson Jesus Christ is.

III. What inferences may be drawn from it.

I. Let us inquire into the meaning of this—He is a lesson.

To understand this, we must look upon the church as a great school, wherein we ourselves, and all others that are baptized with Christian baptism, are thereby entered as scholars. Baptism is the enrolling or enlisting of us as scholars in this school. And can any thing be said then, with reason, against the baptizing of infants? Do not ye oftentimes send your children to school very young and little, before you expect they should learn much? No matter, say you, we will enter them. Now in this great school,

1. There is a head master, or teacher, and that is the Spirit of God, the alone teacher of hearts, John xiv. 26; xv. 1.

2. There are the ushers and under teachers; and those are the ministers, whose work it is, as ministers, to instruct and teach people, young and old, weak and strong, one with milk by catechising, the other with strong meat by preaching, as they are able to bear it.

3. There is the lesson they are to learn, and that is, in one word, *Christ*. Christ is the lesson, the great lesson, taught in the church. Learn him, and you learn all. Learn not him, and you learn nothing. The expression may seem harsh and uncouth, but you see it is Paul's phrase of speech, and, I think, he had the Spirit of God,—*Ye have not so learned Christ.*

What is it to learn Christ?

1. We must learn *to know* him. This is absolutely necessary, and on this the foundation of all the rest is to be laid, John xvii. 3. it is life eternal; the way to life eternal; the first step towards it. The knowledge of Christ blessed Paul preferred before every thing in this world, Phil. iii. 8, 10. Now how unlike herein are the most of us to Paul, who prefer every thing else before this. There are four things, especially, which we should all covet to know concerning Christ.

(1.) Who and what he is in himself. He is God and he is man. He is God-man.

He is God blessed for ever, begotten of the Father before all worlds. This account of the knowledge he had of him Peter gave when the question was put to him, Matt. xvi. 15, *Whom say ye that I am?—Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* Do ye know this? Not with comprehensive knowledge,—as if we could, by our finite understandings, fathom the depth of it, for it is a mystery *how* it should be, a son without a mother,—but with the knowledge of faith that it is. We are to believe it because God hath revealed it.

He is man also. He was born of the Virgin Mary, in the fulness of time; when the word was made flesh: and here is another mystery to be believed, and not to be pryed into—that there should be a son without a father. Now these two natures, united in one person, are Christ. Have ye learned this? O learn it.

(2.) What he hath done.

He hath fulfilled all righteousness, by the perfect obedience of his life.

He hath satisfied God's justice for all our sins, by the merit of his death.

He hath raised himself again out of the grave, on the third day, and thereby declared himself to be the Son of God with power.

Yea, and he is still doing for us in heaven, where he lives to make intercession.

And hereafter, at the end of the world, he will certainly come again with great glory to judge both quick and dead. Have ye learned this? Do ye know it? Again,

(3.) What he hath said. There are a great many choice sayings of his recorded in the book called the Bible; nay, choice sermons preached by him, for he was a preacher. Those we should learn, for they contain in them the whole will of God concerning our salvation, which he came out of the Father's bosom to reveal and make known. And yet how many heed them not, nor mind to learn them; they had rather be reading an idle romance, or play-book. God complains, Hos. viii. 12. "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing,"—much more, my gospel.

(4.) What he is made of God to all his elect, such as were given to him from all eternity by the Father. He is their foundation, food, root, raiment, head, hope, refuge, righteousness. Have ye learned this? Ye have heard it often, but have ye learned it? Have ye understood all these things? Can ye say ye know them? There is a two-fold knowledge:

One that swims in the head, and goes no further.

Another, that sinks into the heart.

2. We must learn to *believe* in him. Not only learn what it is to believe, but to do it. Many can answer to what is faith in Jesus Christ that have not faith in him. Now to learn Christ is to have faith in

Christ; none else can say they have learned him, John vi. 45. To believe in Christ, is to come to Christ, as the sick man comes to the physician, the thirsty to the fountain, the hungry to the cupboard, the malefactor to the city of refuge. Have ye thus learned him, received him, closed with him, let all go for him, all your sins, all your own righteousness, saying, None but Christ, none but Christ?

3. We must learn to *love* him. The apostle speaks of being *taught of God to love one another*, 1 Thess. iv. 9. and certainly there is such a thing as being taught of God to love Jesus Christ. Now have ye been so taught? Can ye appeal to him, with Peter, and say, Lord Jesus, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee? They that do not love him have not learned him. Learn but two things of him, and you cannot but love him:

How lovely he is in himself, Ps. xlv. 2. Cant. v. 10, &c. And

How loving he hath been to you in giving himself for you, Gal. ii. 20.—in washing you from your sins in his own blood. Paul prays—"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," Eph. iii. 19.

4. We must learn to *obey* him, to do in every thing as he would have us to do. Faith and love without this, if we could suppose them without it, which certainly they are not if true, are nothing, signify nothing, John xiv. 15; xv. 14. Paul is in the context exhorting Christians to walk worthy of their calling, not as do the heathen; No, says he, you have *not so learned Christ*—you are better taught.

5. We must learn to suffer for him, if he call us thereunto. And what day passes over our heads wherein we are not, in one kind or other, called to it? Now have ye learned to do it, to take up your cross, and to follow him? Luke ix. 23.

II. What kind of lesson is Christ?

1. He is the lesson that all should learn; all that mean to be saved should learn Jesus Christ. There is no salvation in any other, Acts iv. 12. John xiv. 6. You are not all bound to learn Latin, or Greek, or Hebrew; to learn Logic, Philosophy, or Mathematics; to learn the several trades and manufactures; but you are all bound to learn Christ, bound by the covenant of your baptism, bound by your being called Christians. Either cease to be called a Christian, or learn Christ,—to know, believe, love, him.

2. He is the lesson that any one may learn. There are some arts and sciences that are above and beyond the capacity of some people, though they would never so much wish it; though they desire and endeavour all that ever they can, yet it will not do; they labour in vain. Now such a lesson Christ is not. He is an easy lesson, easy to be learned. Mistake me not; I do not mean easy to mere nature; no, it is quite contrary; it is to mere nature hard and difficult, nay, utterly impossible, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14. Witness Nicodemus, John iii. But easy—to the mind enlightened, easy—to the willing learner, Prov. xiv. 6. easy—where God gives a faculty, which he always doth to those that seek it. Christ is a way—wherein "The way-faring men, though fools, shall not err," Isa. xxxv. 8. O learn this way; you must travel it. How could it have been else, that so many plain illiterate men, such as the apostles were, should all on the sudden be such proficients in this learning?

3. He is the lesson that few do learn: the more is the pity. People are taken up with the study of other things, but make light of this learning, as of the gospel feast, Matt. xxii. 1—7. Matt. vii. 14.

4. He is the lesson that multitudes are damned eternally for not learning. If I should say it is the only damning sin, I could make it good from Scripture. Whatever we have done amiss, if we have learned Christ, it shall be forgiven: whatever good we have done, unless we have learned Christ, it will not be accepted. This will be the question,—Hath he learned Christ? Is he found in him? Rom. viii. 1. If children at school do not learn their lesson, there is but a rod to whip with; but if we do not learn Christ, there is a hell to burn us in.

5. He is a lesson that we must be sure to learn by heart, I mean, be hearty in learning, inward, sincere, upright, serious, *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, Rom. x. 10. Prov. xxiii. 26. If we learn Christ to talk of him only, and not to walk in him; to have him on the tip of our tongues, and not to lodge him in the secret chambers of our hearts, it will not do.

6. He is a lesson that is best learned upon our knees. When in a humble sense of our ignorance, blindness, darkness, dulness, we go to God, every day, for the unction, saying, Lord, teach me,—as David, up and down the 119th Ps. (he, *thy statutes*—we, thy Christ,) we learn best; we then make the best progress in this school, Ps. xxv. 9. Zech. iv. 5. 13.

7. He is a lesson that but one book is enough to teach us. Other learning is not had without abundance of books; philosophers, historians, physicians, lawyers, must have large libraries; but one book alone well learned will suffice to make thee a Christian, 2 Tim. iii. 15. Then search the Scriptures, John v. 29. Prefer having eyes to read the Scriptures, and be blind to every thing else, than to read every thing else and neglect the Bible.

8. He is a lesson that it will do us abundance of good to learn. It is a useful lesson. All kinds of learning are in some way or other useful, but this learning excels them all, for it is profitable for all things.

It is unspeakably satisfying to the understanding part. The most learned, after all their inquiries into other learning, have professed themselves uneasy and dissatisfied, but this fills; as the great Mr. Selden,* when dying, said, he had rest no where but in Tit. ii. 11—14.

It is unspeakably sweet, and comfortable, and refreshing, and joyous; like honey and the honeycomb. Every word of God is so, Ps. xix. 10. but especially God the word.—How sweet is it to a lost undone sinner, to be acquainted with a Saviour! Other learning increased, increases, sorrow, Eccl. i. 18. but this doth not.

It is strangely renewing and changing within, in the inner man; making the tree good; bowing the will; raising the affections, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

It is strangely reforming and amending without—in the life and conversation.

There is no bridle like this to keep us from sin. When a temptation to sin comes, it says—No, I have not so learned Christ. I thank God, I am better taught. There are other arguments on this head.

Is this thy kindness to thy friend?
It will be bitter in the end;
Thy vows, O God, upon me lie,
Should such an one as I am fly?

Was Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. Did he teach me to be proud, passionate, envious, drunken? No, I never learned that of him.

There is no spur like this to put us on duty.

He that hath learned Christ hath learned the example of Christ, learned him as a copy to write after. To learn Christ is to learn of Christ—"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me," Matt. xi. 29. It is called his law, Gal. vi. 2.

He that hath learned Christ, hath learned the encouragements given by Christ in the promises.

9. He is a lesson that we can never be perfect at. He that hath learned it best, and learned most of it, must, after all, say there is more to be learned; —yet *ever learning*, 2 Tim. iii. 7. is true of this learning.—It is a bottomless ocean that we can never fathom; our finite understandings are not capable of reaching his infinite perfections, 1 Cor. viii. 2.

10. He is a lesson that when we have once learned we can never unlearn again. It is the better part, that can never, never be taken away, Luke x. 42. All other learning may be lost. Many a great scholar hath gone mopish. However, death dissolves it, melts it, it is gone like a snow-ball in a thaw. It is a pity it should be so, but so it is. But he that hath learned Christ, hath learned him for ever. Death robs him not of it, but perfects it, 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

III. What inferences are to be deduced from hence?

1. An inference of reproof to several sorts of persons.

(1.) To those that slight and despise this excellent lesson and learning, as if it were not worth the looking after. "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." The blessed stoop to look into this depth, and is it below us?

(2.) To those that have learned Christ in some good measure, but do not improve their learning — Who do not improve it for their own furtherance in the ways of God and godliness; that use it not as a bridle, a spur.—Nor for the instruction of others; especially those under their charge. When Andrew had found Christ he called Peter, when Philip found him he called Nathaniel, John i. So should we; not in pride and vain glory, but with an earnest concern that others may be acquainted with him.

2. An inference of comfort and encouragement to those that fall not justly under either of these reproofs—that prize this lesson, and are learning and improving it for their own and others' good. Go on and prosper; the Lord is with you, "Your path shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18. There is a promise, Matt. xxv. 29. for your encouragement—"Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance."

3. An inference of exhortation to all.

By all means, whatever ye do, learn Christ. Con this lesson; be conning it every day. "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord," Hos. vi. 3. *Follow* on by daily prayer, reading, hearing, meditation, conference. When ye have it, it will make you rich amends—here and hereafter. Value that preaching best, that hath most of Christ in it. It is sad to see whole sermons printed, and Christ not once named in them. Is that preaching Christ? Paul could say, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord," 2 Cor. iv. 5. 1 Cor. ii. 2. Remember, ye are Christians. What! and not learn Christ?

Ye that are young. Now is your learning age; some of you are scholars—O learn Christ.

Ye that are old. There is yet a learning day. Nicodemus was old when he began.—Yea, all of you—learn Christ.

* Called by Grotius the Glory of England. He died A. D. 1654.

## SERMON XXXIV.

### CHRIST IS OUR LADDER.

GEN. xxviii. 12.

*And he dreamed, and, behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and, behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.*

THIS ladder which Jacob saw, was no other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who was, under that notion and resemblance, represented to him. What else should it be? And a very clear notion it is, and very helpful to our understandings to apprehend what he is made of God unto us—*a ladder*.

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is made of God unto us our ladder.

You all know what a ladder is, and what use it is for. Now just such a thing our Lord Jesus Christ is—*our ladder;* and of the same use he is to us spiritually, for the good of our poor souls.

But, says some one, it was only a dream.

I answer, It was a divine dream, sent of God; a vision, than which nothing can be more certain.

Show, I. The properties of this ladder.

II. Of what use it is to us.

III. The inferences.

I. I am to show the properties of this ladder.

It is a ladder in all respects extraordinary; there never was any other like it.

1. It is a living ladder. In the same sense in which, as a way, he is called a *new and living way*, Heb. x. 20. in the same sense, as a ladder, he is a *new and a living ladder*. Other ladders are dead things, but this ladder lives. It is true he was dead, but he is alive again, and lives for evermore, Rev. i. 18. And it is well for us that he is so; for if he live, then we shall live also.

2. A long ladder. The longest that ever was, for it reaches from earth to heaven. That was the posture in which Jacob saw it—*the foot upon the earth, and the top of it in heaven*. Hereby was signified his two natures;—his divine nature, as God; his human nature, as man. As man—he was set upon the earth, a son of Adam, born of a woman, lived here upon the earth for a time, as other men do. As God—he was always in heaven, begotten of the Father before all worlds, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable. The uniting of these two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man, in one person, is the mystery of all mysteries, 1 Tim. iv. 16. That the glory of the Godhead did not destroy the meanness of the manhood, nor the meanness of the manhood debase the glory of the Godhead, is mysterious indeed.—The bush which Moses saw, burning and not consumed, was an emblem of this.

But what need was there that the foot of the ladder should be upon the earth—that our Redeemer should be man?

I reply, There was need, that he might have a body wherein to suffer and die; such a body as ours that had sinned, for whom he was to die.

But what necessity is there that the top of it should reach to heaven—that he should be God?

I answer, That the Godhead might give virtue and value to the sufferings of the manhood, and that he might support it under them—which else would have failed. Besides, to bring God and man together, it was requisite he should be both God and man: God—that he might deal with God, which man as man was not fit to do; man—that he might deal with man which God as God, a holy God, could not do, without consuming him, a sinful creature; as a consuming fire, with stubble. Here is the meaning of his being *Emanuel*, God with us; God in our nature which if he had not been he could not have been *Jesus*, a Saviour, Matt. i. 21—23.

Now our duty hereupon is,

(1.) To adore infinite love and infinite wisdom in the contrivance of this way, which no other could have found out; saying, Lord, who is like unto thee. And,

(2.) To say also—What shall we render?

3. A lasting ladder. Other ladders wear out in process of time, and fail, and come to be good for nothing but the fire: says the workman, I dare not venture to climb it, I shall fall and break my bones, it is worm-eaten and rotten. There is no danger of that in this ladder, Heb. xiii. 8. The righteousness which is brought in by him is *everlasting* righteousness, Dan. ix. 24. All the saints from the beginning have made use of it, and it never yet did fail any, nor never will, to the world's end. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him," Heb. vii. 25.—to the *utmost* of times.

4. A free ladder, open and common to all; whosoever will may come, and make use of it and welcome. If we do not by unbelief exclude ourselves, God hath no where excluded us. The promise runs in general terms, Isa. lv. 1. Matt. xi. 28. John vii. 37. Rev. xxii. 17. The fountain is *open*, not sealed. Zech. xiii. 1. Our Lord Jesus was born in an inn, which is free to all comers;—died with his arms stretched out upon the cross, and was nailed so, to signify his readiness to embrace all that will come to him.

5. A firm ladder; steady and strong. Our Redeemer is mighty, Heb. vii. 25—*able to save*. From what? From our sins.

From the guilt of them: how many, how great, soever; crimson, scarlet, guilt; by the infinite merit of his blood and passion.

From the dominion and power of them, by his Spirit and grace. Though the devil himself steps in to

strengthen the snare he is able to burst and break it, and to set us free.—Therefore fear not, nor be dismayed; greater is he that is with us than he that is against us.

6. A ladder fitted every way for the use for which it was intended. But,

II. Of what use is it to us?

1. That by it blessings might descend from heaven unto us. If our Lord Jesus had not interposed by dying to make peace, this could not have been. Curses, wrath, light-bolts, thunder-bolts, might have come down, and would have come, without this ladder; but, no blessing, no token for good, no beam of favour. There would have been fire and brimstone, as on Sodom.—The reason was, because man had sinned, and thereby God was provoked, and till divine justice was fully satisfied, mercy could do nothing. The way was blocked up. Now Christ comes, and by dying makes satisfaction, and so takes out of the way that that hindered, and now blessings are showered down of all sorts, temporal, spiritual, concerning the life that now is, and that which is to come. "God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," Phil. iv. 19. —not some, but *all*. And how? By Christ Jesus. He is the ladder by whom they descend, the conduit pipe for conveyance of all our fresh water from the fountain above to the cisterns below.

It is by this ladder—that all our pardons come. We are needing of them every day; give us this day —and forgive us this day; and we never have them but when we come for them in his name. All the infinite mercy that is in God, did never forgive one sin out of Christ.

It is by this ladder—that all the grace and strength we have comes. Of this also we have daily need,—for doing duty, resisting temptations, bearing afflictions. It comes down to us by this ladder, therefore it is called the *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*, because we have it only by him, and from him, and through him, John i. 16.

It is by this ladder—that all the returns of prayer come in, John xvi. 23. We had lately a day of prayer, wherein special mercies were prayed for with reference to present affairs. Which way must those mercies come, think ye? Certainly, down this ladder.

2. That by it we may ascend from earth to heaven, and go to God.—From earth to heaven is a long way, and up-hill too. There is no ladder from *hell* to heaven. Fly *it* we cannot, Luke xvi. 26. We have no wings for the purpose. But climb to heaven we may; and how, but by a ladder? Christ is that ladder.

By this ladder our performances must all ascend while we live; our prayers, and praises, and alms-deeds, our fastings, and humiliations. You would have them go to God, would you not? and be accepted of God, would you not? Then they must go by Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. He is the high priest, his intercession is the incense, Rev. viii. 3.

By this ladder our persons must ascend when we die, John xiv. 6. No man cometh to the Father, but by him, to the kingdom of the Father, the glory, presence, vision, fruition of God.

It was the merit of his death that purchased it for us; that is the price of it.

It is the working of his Spirit in us that fits us for it.

It is the efficacy of his prayer that brings us to it, John xvii. 24. We never begin to climb this ladder till converted, and then step by step; gradually is sin weakened, grace strengthened; not all at once.

III. What inferences arise hence?

The inferences shall be by way of answer to five questions.

1. If Christ be our ladder for us to ascend on, how is it then said here, that Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending?

The ascending and descending of the angels of God upon this ladder, Christ, is for our good, benefit, and advantage. The angels are ministering spirits for us, Heb. i. 14. The design of the vision was to comfort Jacob at his entrance upon a perilous journey in his flight from his angry brother. It was a seasonable refreshing cordial, Ps. xci. 11, 12; xxxiv. 7. 2 Kings vi. 17.

*But why ascending?*

(1.) For fresh orders, to act for their good every day, Matt. xviii. 10. *their* angels; though nothing else be theirs, "their angels always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven,"—expecting the least nod or beck.

(2.) To give account of their stewardship; what they have done. Allude to Luke xiv. 21. Read Job i. and Zech. 1.

(3.) With separate, departed souls in their arms, to place them in Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22.

*But why descending?*

To execute their orders, for preservation, provision, society, supply.—Jacob was alone here, he had no company. O how sweet is it to see both the ladder, and the travellers going up and down! Note, all are either ascending or descending, none standing still, none idle, all busy. This may comfort all the Lord's poor Jacobs in all their straits and troubles; not the Esaus, the wicked of the world; their attendants are ugly devils, living and dying.

2. If Jesus Christ be our ladder, what is faith?

The hand by which we take hold of the ladder.

The foot also, by which we come to it, and climb by it. As good then even no ladder as no hands and feet; as good there were no Christ as no faith, John viii. 24. an unbelieving soul is a maimed soul, handless and footless, and therefore helpless. Then be not faithless, but believing. Reach hither thy hand, as Christ said to Thomas, John xx. in a sight

and sense of thy undone condition without him; receive the report of the gospel concerning him, his ability and willingness to save. Renounce all other ladders, and cleave to this alone; behold, he calls thee.

3. What are the rounds of this ladder?

The several particulars of his undertaking: steps downward first, and then upwards; on each of which there is matter for faith to fasten on,—his incarnation, temptation, passion, resurrection.

4. Is Christ alone the ladder? are there no other ladders but he?

No other: how should there be? Who are they? Who besides him hath his foot on earth, and his head in heaven? Name who.

The papists fancy other ladders to themselves; saints and angels; the Virgin Mary. Are these God? The angels ascend and descend upon the ladder; they are not the ladder.

But their end in ascending and descending is as mediators for us; they ascend with our prayers and descend with God's answer.

What Scripture is there for that? Where doth the word of God tell us so? If no where, there is no ground for faith, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin; nay, it says the contrary, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

The protestant, pharisaical self-justiciaries make a ladder of their own righteousness. They hope to work out peace, and pardon, and salvation for themselves, by their own performances, as the poor carnal mistaken Jews of old did, Rom. x. 3. Paul disclaims this way to heaven, Phil. iii. 7, 8. How can we be a ladder to ourselves? Alas! the best of our doings are imperfect, and defiled. However, they are *duty*, therefore they cannot *merit* any thing. Say then, I beseech you, None but Christ.

5. Why is it said, *Behold* a ladder?

It is common both in the Old Testament and the New, when Christ is spoken of, to say, *Behold*, Isa. vii. 14; xlii. 1. John i. 29. This notes to us, what our duty is in reference to him.

We are to admire and wonder, as oft as we think of him, Isa. ix. 6. his name is wonderful. They do not know him, that do not wonder at him; at what he is, at what he hath done and suffered, at what he is doing, at his love and free grace especially.

Behold and bless God for making and rearing this ladder.

To behold him, is to believe in him, Isa. lxv. 1; xlv. 22—*Look unto me*, as the stung Israelites to the brazen serpent.

There are four special seasons wherein to behold this ladder:

(1.) when we are doing any thing for God, then behold it as the only way and means of being strengthened for it, and of being accepted in it.

(2.) When we have done any thing against God, when guilt stares us in the face, then behold—as the only way and means of peace and pardon.

(3.) When distress, and trouble, and danger are before us, then behold it, and the angels ascending and descending on it.

(4.) When death is about to lay his cold hand upon us,—as Stephen, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God," Acts vii. 56.

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## SERMON XXXV.

### CHRIST IS THE TRUTH.

JOHN i. 17.

*The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

THERE are two Johns especially spoken of in the New Testament, John the Baptist, and John the divine. These words were spoken by the former, and recorded or written by the latter, *John bare witness of him*, that is, John the Baptist, his fore-runner or harbinger, that was to him, as the morning star is to the sun, his messenger, to tell the world that he was coming. And what was it that he bare witness to concerning him? This among the rest, that *grace and truth came by him.*

Two things are here opposed to *the law* that came by Moses.

Grace. It is elsewhere so opposed, Rom. vi. 14 "Not under the *law*, but under *grace*,"—where by law is commonly understood the Mosaical dispensation, the management whereof was in such a way, with so much terror, that it looked like as if it had been the first covenant of works; and some have so mistaken it to be, and called it so. Then by grace is meant the new covenant, called the covenant of grace, which it is a great privilege to be under. There is between this covenant and the other as much difference as between being under the cold, dark shades of the night, and the bright, warm, refreshing beams of the noon sun; between being in bondage and being at liberty. Now taking *grace* in this sense, it came by Jesus Christ, it is made in him, and by him, and through him. And, therefore, he is expressly called the covenant, Isa. xlii. 6; xlix. 8. We should bless God for this grace, and take the comfort of it, and walk answerably to it, not letting sin have dominion over us.

*Truth.*

DOCT. That truth came by Jesus Christ: it came when Jesus Christ came—when the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

He is *the truth*, John xiv. 6.—the way, *that* way;—the truth, that truth; *the* life, *that* life. There are many ways, and many truths, and many lives, or kinds of life, but Jesus Christ is most eminently and

transcendently that way, truth, life: the true and living way, or the way in which, the truth by and through which, we come to that life, which alone deserves the name of life, and that is, eternal life.

I shall, I. Explain what the truth is, and how the truth came by Jesus Christ. And,

II. Apply it.

I. Explain the subject.

When our Lord Jesus Christ was at Pilate's bar, John xviii. 37, 38. he said, "*For this cause* came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth,"—to which Pilate replies by asking him a question—*What is truth?* and before he had his answer, went his way. It is a pity he had not staid; we had then known from the mouth of truth what is truth; but he went out. It is so with many people; they take on them as if they desired to know the truth, and to know their duty; but it is but a copy of their countenance, really they do not; as Balaam, Numb. xxii. There is one way of knowing what is truth, by the contraries. There are three things that are contrary to truth, by considering which, it may be known what truth is:

1. Figures, and shadows, and types are things contrary to truth. As suppose the picture or representation of a man; we do not say it is the true man; the *truth* is he that is represented by it. Now so the truth came by Jesus Christ; that is, all the figures, and types, and shadows of him whereby he was held forth to the fathers under the Old Testament, were all fulfilled in him, and therefore when he, *the* truth, the substance, was come, they were all to vanish away; and so they did, Heb. ix. 24—*the figures of the true.* For example,

Under the Old Testament they had manna—little, round, and white—which came down in a dew every morning, and was their food for four years. Here was a figure, a shadow.—Now the truth of this came by Jesus Christ; he is the true manna, John vi. 32.—the *true* bread.

They had a brazen serpent hung upon a pole, that whosoever had been stung, and did but look, was healed by virtue of God's ordinance.—Now when Christ came, the truth of this came. He is the true brazen serpent, John iii. 14, 15. The looking is by faith, Isa. xlv. 22.

They had a rock that followed them, and supplied them with water.—The truth of that rock was Christ, 1 Cor. x. 4.

We read of a ladder that Jacob saw, the feet whereof was upon earth, the head in heaven.—The truth of that ladder was Christ.

We read of a ram that was brought to Abraham to sacrifice instead of Isaac.—The truth of that ram was Christ sacrificed for us and in our stead.

We read of a lamb that was slain at the passover, and the blood sprinkled, whereupon the destroying angel passed by.—That lamb was Christ, 1 Cor. v. 7.

We read of a high priest richly clothed, and bearing on his breast the names of the twelve tribes, and going into the holy of holies, and burning incense there.—The truth of this was Christ: and so of all the rest. Now to make more new significant ceremonies, is to intimate that Christ is not come.

2. Falsehood and error is contrary to truth. There is truth doctrinal, 2 Tim. ii. 18. Now this truth is but one; error is manifold. There are many errors, but only one truth, and that one truth is Christ. When he came, the truth came.

A preacher of the truth came.

A witness of the truth came.

(1.) He preached the truth. All that he said in all his sermons, parables, discourses, disputations, was all true, as true as truth itself. He never broached, nor owned, nor patronized, any error; no, not any, not the least. Several great truths of grand importance he taught. As,

Concerning the design of the Father in sending him into the world, which was, to save the world, John iii. 16. He was the first that plainly and clearly revealed this. It was hid before, John i. 18.

Concerning the necessity of regeneration, John iii. 3, 5. Which of the prophets spake of such a thing as a new birth? They call for turning, amending—but he, of being born again.

Concerning spiritual worship, John iv. 24. in spirit; in opposition to the Old-Testament carnal way, by carnal ordinances. There is now an end put to those. The truth is come.

Concerning the process of the great judgment. Where have we such a manifestation of it, as that in Matt. xxv. 31—46. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them

on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. The judge himself tells us here, how, and in what manner, he will proceed.—Now we have great reason to bless God that the truth is come in this sense also. But,

(2.) He came a witness to the truth, John xviii. 37.

A witness is a martyr, and such was he: he sealed the truth with his blood. So have many others besides him, both preachers and others, but he led the van. We call Stephen the proto-martyr of the New Testament, Acts vii. No; Jesus Christ was the Proto-martyr of the New Testament. Therefore, none need to fear or be ashamed; their dear Lord went before them to martyrdom.

3. Falseness and unfaithfulness is contrary to truth. A man of truth is he,

(1.) That speaks the truth in his heart, Ps. xv. 2. He will not tell a lie for the sake of any one, nor for any worldly gain or advantage whatsoever. Such a man of truth was Jesus Christ; not only when in the pulpit, in his preaching; but in his ordinary converse. His word was not yea and nay, but his yea was yea, and his nay, nay.

(2.) That keeps covenant, and performs promise. This he doth. You may safely venture upon what he says in those scriptures, Matt. xi. 28. John vi. 37—"Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."—And in any other, for in him all the promises are yea, and in him amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. Compare Rev. iii. 14. and read Ps. lxxxv. 10. He promised his disciples, when he went, he would come again; and did he not meet them in Galilee? Did he not send upon them his Spirit? He did so.

Is he not true also to his threatenings?

He is, certainly, except we repent. If we do, he repents; else not. See, as to Jerusalem, Matt. xxiii. 38. which came to pass.

(3.) That is just to all his relations, and discharges honestly all his undertakings, without failing in the least.—So did he, to his disciples, while with them, as their master; so doth he to all his saints, as head, husband, father, brother, friend, king, captain. Then for his undertaking, he fulfilled it to the utmost. I mean, his great undertaking to redeem and save. He fulfilled it to the utmost, without flinching, or starting back, John xvii. 4. Did his Father contradict what he said? No, he did not. And then, for all his other undertakings subordinate to this, he hath been, is, and will be, just and true to them;—in hearing prayers, forgiving sins, supplying wants, subduing enemies.

II. The application.

Is Christ the truth? When he came did the truth come? Then what is our duty? what doth this call for at our hands?

1. We must *know* the truth, John viii. 31, 32. Be acquainted with it. It is a pity we should any of us be ignorant of it, not acquainted with it, personally acquainted. Do ye know Jesus Christ? Have ye learned him? O get to know him, it is life eternal, John xvii. 3. It will make you *free*, John viii. 32. free from a deal of bondage, and misery, and mistake, that poor ignorant souls are subject to. See Paul's resolution, "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 7, 8. The way to know this truth is to search the Scriptures; dig into them, John v. 39. Also pray much. Beg of God an enlightened mind.

2. We must *buy* the truth, buy it and not sell it, Prov. xxiii. 23. Christ the truth is a jewel worth your dealing for. You may all have him, you cannot buy him at any rate too dear, though with the price of all you are, and have, and can do. He is the true treasure, Matt. xiii. 44—46.

3. We must *receive* the truth. This receiving act is it that makes the truth ours, John i. 12. Not only receive him in our understandings, by unfeigned assent, but into our wills and affections, into our hearts and souls, by unfeigned consent; as the wife receives the husband when she takes him to be her husband; the servant the master, Matt. xi. 29.

4. We must *rejoice* in the truth, 1 Cor. xiii. 6. This we cannot do till we know it, till we receive it. Hast thou received Christ Jesus the Lord? Then thou hast reason to rejoice in him, for if he be thine all is thine. We are told of a philosopher,* that having found out a mathematical demonstration, was so pleased that he ran about like a madman, crying, I have found it, I have found it. Much more may the upright soul, Phil. iii. 3. John i. 45.

5. We must *love* the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 10. Zech. viii. 19. Truth is a thing peculiarly amiable; it hath a loveliness in it above and beyond all other things, especially this great truth, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15.—a truth worthy to be embraced with both arms.

* Archimedes. He died about 208 years before the Christian æra.

6. We must *speak* the truth one to another, Eph. iv. 25. It is an abominable thing for those that call themselves the followers of Christ—the truth—to be found liars, Eph. iv. 15. Isa. lxiii. 8.

7. We must *worship* God in truth, John iv. 23, 24. "Let us draw near with a true heart," Heb. x. 22. That is, in sincerity and uprightness, not in guile and hypocrisy,—or in truth, that is, in Christ, as our only medium of worship—in his name.

8. We must *walk* in the truth, 3 John 3, 4. that is, in Christ Jesus, Col. ii. 6. Have ye received him as the truth? then walk in him as the truth;

By relying wholly and solely upon him, in the great business of your reconciliation and salvation, and in all your straits and troubles, Acts xxvii. 25.

By being in your measure like him, in word and deed; just and true, and fast and faithful, to God and man, Rev. ii. 10.

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## SERMON XXXVI.

### CHRIST IS OUR TREASURE.

MATT. xiii. 44.

*Again: The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field.*

BY this *treasure* we are to understand our Lord Jesus Christ, the king of this *kingdom* here spoken of.

DOCT. That our Lord Jesus Christ is our treasure.

He that hath found him, and hath him, may truly say he hath found treasure.

Show, I. What treasure is, and what it implies.

II. What kind of treasure Jesus Christ is; and,

III. What use we are to make of it.

I. What is a treasure?

In treasure two things are supposed:

The one: That the things be excellent and useful.

The other: That there be abundance of them; else it cannot be said to be treasure.

The things must be such as are both excellent and useful; things of worth and value. We do not reckon a heap of stones or dirt to be treasure. Treasure is of gold, or silver, jewels; either money or money's worth. In Jeremiah xli. 8. we read of *treasures of wheat and barley, and oil and honey:* though these are not gold and silver, yet they are things useful and necessary.

There must also be abundance of them. A little is not said to be treasure. No; where there is treasure, there is a deal to be had of such things; plenty of gold, variety of jewels, stores of wheat. And is not Christ treasure, then? Are there not abundance of excellent useful things to be had with him? Can you name any thing that is either truly excellent, or truly useful, that is not to be had with him, and that in abundance, full measure, pressed down, and running over? Col. i. 19.—*fulness—all* fulness *dwelling* in him.

1. Is he not the *Sun* of Righteousness? Mal. iv. 2. the *light* of the world? John viii. 12. As full as the sun is of light, and that is as full as it can hold; so full, and infinitely more so, is Christ of righteousness and grace, and strength of Spirit, and merit; which are excellent things, and I am sure useful to us, for we are undone without them.

2. Is he not the *fountain* opened? Zech. xiii. 1. A fountain is not a cistern, though it is true a cistern may be full; yet there is a great deal of difference between a cistern full, and a fountain full. A cistern may be full, but it doth not run over; if it do there is nothing to supply it with more, as there is in a fountain. Empty a fountain as often as you will, it fills itself without pouring any thing into it; not so a cistern. Now Christ's fulness is a fountain-fulness, and we have need of such.

3. Is he not a *horn* of salvation? Luke i. 69. A horn signifies plenty. His salvation is plentiful salvation. He is able to save to the uttermost, Heb. vii. 25. And is not salvation an excellent useful thing? Is any thing more excellent, more useful? Especially spiritual salvation; to be saved from our sins, the guilt, the power of them:—eternal salvation, to be saved from the wrath to come, from hell, and damnation; to be instated in the heavenly inheritance? Of all this there is a horn, an abundance, with Jesus Christ for poor sinners. Therefore, we may well say of him, he is our treasure.—But,

II. What kind of treasure is the Lord Jesus Christ?

There are these properties of this treasure.

1. It is peculiar treasure. The great God hath such a saying concerning his people Israel, Exod. xix. 5. *Ye shall be a peculiar people.*—I am sure his people Israel may truly say so of him.—He is a peculiar treasure; that is,

He is treasure by itself; such treasure as hath none like it; a nonesuch treasure; a treasure beyond all other treasures. *The peculiar treasure of kings, and of the provinces,* which Solomon speaks of, Eccl. ii. 8. is not to be compared with this treasure. It is as far beyond it as gold is beyond dross, as pearls are beyond pebbles, as substance is beyond shadow.

He is the treasure of but a few. There are people that have worldly treasure, here and there one in a country; there are few people that make Christ their treasure. The most despise and make light of him; they mind him not. God's number is by far the smaller number. Many are called, but few chosen; like the grape-gleanings of the vintage, so like the shaking of an olive tree. But

Those few that have him, have propriety in him, they may call him theirs. My beloved is *mine*—mine to all intents and purposes; a *peculiar treasure unto me*. And this is indeed the sweet of it: "Who loved *me* and gave himself for *me*; *my* beloved and *my* friend."

2. Precious treasure.

Precious in himself; of infinite worth and value. The pearl of price, *v.* 45. is Christ. His blood is precious, 1 Pet. i. 19. His promises are precious, 2 Pet. i. 4.

Precious in their account and esteem that have him, 1 Pet. ii. 7. They have precious thoughts of him, Ps. cxxxix. 20. They have let all go for him, as Paul, Phil. iii. 7, 8. "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." This is the language of one that had found this treasure.

3. Unseen, hid treasure. Other treasures are visible, this invisible, out of sight, as believers and God's hidden ones are. So Christ is a believer's hidden one, Col. iii. 3. Manna that none knows but they themselves that have it, and not they themselves always. Mary, when Christ spake to her, thought it had been the gardener, John xx. 15.

4. Undefiled; honestly come by. Other treasures are not so oftentimes; they that have them scrape them together by fraud, violence, oppression. That which Solomon had, was in a great measure of that kind, as appears by what they told his son—Thy father made our yoke grievous. But those that have this treasure, Christ,

Have him by *free gift*, John iii. 16. He gave him for us, he gives him also to us. They have him

By *lawful purchase*. It is said here he *bought* it, *v.* 46.—not by paying a valuable consideration; I do not say so; it cannot be. Christ buys us so, but we do not buy him so. It is a purchase *without money and without price*, Isa. lv. 1.—by barter or exchange. We part with our sins, and we have a Saviour; with our own righteousness, our rags, and have his righteousness, that white robe. Have ye been at this market? Have ye made this bargain?

5. It is enriching treasure. It cannot be but that he that hath worldly treasure must needs be a rich man. But he that hath this treasure—Christ, is made rich by it *towards God*, and that is the true riches; that is to be rich indeed. A man may have treasure *for himself*; such treasure as the fool, Luke xii. 20. had in his barns, and not be rich *towards God*, in God's account and esteem; rich towards the world, and a beggar towards God. But if Jesus be thine, thou art rich towards God, God will own thee for a rich man; perhaps poor on earth, rich in heaven. O covet these riches. Get Christ to be thine, and thou hast enough.

6. It is enduring treasure. Other treasures are not so:

Sometimes they moulder away of themselves, Prov. xxiii. 5.

Other times they are spent by the owners.

Other times they are plundered and stolen by thieves.—But of either of these, there is no danger as to this treasure.

It hath no principle of corruption in itself.

They that have it shall not spend it; they may live upon it.

They that would cannot take it away. The hiding of it *in God*, speaks not only the secrecy, but also the safety, of it, John x. 28, 29. Luke x. 42. A good reason why we should each of us give all diligence to make it sure unto ourselves, Matt. vi. 19, 20.

III. What use is to be made of this subject?

1. If Christ be treasure, then what a condition are they in that are without him? They are in a poor beggarly condition, Rev. iii. 17. Worldly poverty nobody is fond of; it is a grief, a trouble, a shame, a disgrace, a burthen. They that are under it are weary of it, and fain they would, if they knew how, be delivered from it; but as to spiritual poverty, it is not so; quite otherwise. There is no evil in it, nothing felt from it. O be persuaded this day to change your mind herein. Believe a poor soul that hath no spiritual riches, no Christ to make it rich towards God, to be in a far more miserable condition than the poorest beggar in the country, that hath not a rag on his back, nothing to eat, but what he wanders for, no bed to lie on, no place to hide his head in; I say, far more miserable. For,

All this concerns the body only, which is but the shell of the man; the other concerns the soul, the heaven-born soul.

All this concerns this life only, which is passing away, and will be gone shortly, and then in the grave the rich and the poor meet together; there will be no difference between the dust of the one and the dust of the other. But spiritual poverty is the forerunner of eternal misery. The Christless poor here, that live and die so, must be miserable for ever.

All this may be, and yet the man may be in the love and favour of God; his sins pardoned, his peace made; as Lazarus, and many another. But if thy soul be Christless, thou art poor towards God. God is against thee, and all that is in God is against thee, though nothing appear. So it is—there is no middle state.

2. What is to be done that this treasure may be ours?

What did this man do here in the text?

He *found* it hid in the field. He hid it. He was glad he had found it. And, he went and sold all

that he had and bought it. Something like this is to be done by each of us that Christ may be ours.

(1.) We must find him where God hath hid him, and that is, in the field of the Scriptures. I mean we must mix faith with what God hath revealed there concerning him; his ability and willingness to save; his suffering, dying, rising again, with the design thereof; his many gracious invitations, encouraging promises, made to poor sinners to come to him, to accept of him. This must be done with application to ourselves, as if our own names were found written therein. Have ye thus found Christ? He bids us, John v. 39.—*search*. *Search* the Old Testament; he is hid there, but by digging we may find him. Search the New Testament; he is above ground there; we are blind if we see him not. In this sense it is said concerning the strait gate, and narrow way, Few there be that find it; and of the few that *find* it, fewer go in at the gate, and walk in the way: so as to this treasure, not one in ten, twenty, or even a hundred, who read the Bible, find Christ in it, or desire to find him.

(2.) There should be joy at our thus finding him, this was before making the bargain here. Have you ever seen, and understood, and been affected with, God's unspeakable mercy to you in affording you the field, the Scripture, wherein Christ is? in casting your lot and portion within hearing of the joyful sound? Have you said, Lord, how is it? "All the people," on one occasion, "went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them," Neh. viii. 12. It cannot be but the joy must be greater afterwards, when the treasure is made ours; but there is great joy even in this—that it is revealed to us.

(3.) We must hide it. Not with the hiding of concealment, to conceal from others our having found it, lest they should put us by the purchase; there is no danger of that; there should rather be an inclination to the contrary, to proclaim it, as Andrew told Philip. Read John i. Hezekiah did ill to show his treasures, but we must show ours. We must hide it with the hiding of meditation and consideration, as David hid the word, Ps. cxix. 11—as Mary, Luke ii. 19. We must hide it as the woman hid the leaven in the batch, as the husbandman hides the seed by harrowing it, as the stomach hides the meat in order to the digesting of it. Have we ever done this by what we have read and heard out of the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ? Have we reflected afterwards, meditated on it, prayed over it? If not, do it yet. It is God's way, a special means that he hath appointed, and that he uses to bless.

(4.) We must sell all and buy it. Is Christ the truth? buy the truth. Is Christ the treasure? buy the treasure. There is no making him ours any other way.

Begging will not do; we may beg long enough, unless we buy. Read Matt. xxv. Luke xiii.

Steal him we cannot. Some have been made rich that way; but not with these riches, not towards God.

Borrowing will not do. The foolish virgins would have borrowed oil of the wise; but not so.

It passes not by descent from father to son, as land doth to the heirs, or personal estate to the executors; nothing of that here,

There is but one way, and that is by *buying*; and the terms are here set down,—*selling all.*

What all?

(1.) All our sins, Ezek. xviii. 31. how beloved soever, Matt. v. 29, 38.

(2.) All our own righteousness, as to any hope or expectation from the merit of them. We are more loth to part with this than the other, but it must be done, or we cannot possess the treasure.

(3.) All our worldly concerns, if God calls, Matt. x. 37. Now what say you to this? Are you sorrowful, as the young man? Matt. xix. 22. Or do you like the bargain, and will you strike hands this day? It is all trash that you are called to part with; you shall have treasure for it. Could I make you an offer, a real serious offer, of better clothes, instead of those poor ones you have; a better house, estate; you would be glad, and hearken to me, and thank me. But, alas! I fear I shall prevail with none of you to do this for your poor souls. O be persuaded, not almost, but altogether.

3. What must they do that have this treasure, that can say, upon good grounds, I have thus bought it?

There is cause why thou shouldst bless God, all the days of thy life, for enriching thee with this treasure.

Oppose the having of this to the want of all other worldly treasure, Phil. iv. 18.

Where your treasure is, there let your heart be also, Matt. vi. 21.—the thoughts, the affections.

Hold fast your treasure, Cant. iii. 4.

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## SERMON XXXVII.

### CHRIST IS OUR TEMPLE.

REV. xxi. 22.

*And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.*

THAT the Lamb here spoken of is our Lord Jesus Christ, there is no question; but the doubt is, what we are to understand by the *city* here described, whereof the Lamb is the temple. The description of it begins at *v.* 10. And he carried me away in

the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony: the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eight, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it." It cannot be understood literally; there never was and never will be such a city, literally taken, of gold, of pearls. All agree in that. It is therefore to be understood figuratively, and mystically, and spiritually. Something like it is said by the prophet Isaiah, *ch.* liv. 11, 12.

Now the query is, Whether it be meant of heaven, or of some future state of the church in this world? when Babylon shall be fallen, the Jews called, and all the kingdoms of the earth be the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

I think of both, and that neither is to be excluded, for as we say of grace and glory,—that grace is glory begun; and glory is grace perfected: so of this city we say,—it is begun on earth, finished in heaven. If I can prove it is not to be understood of heaven *only*, that will serve my present purpose.

I prove it, 1. Because this city is the bride; the Lamb's wife, *v.* 9. Now that is the church—not triumphant only, but militant.

2. Because it is the holy Jerusalem, *v.* 10. And is not the gospel church so, even in this world; the Sion, the Israel, the Jerusalem of God?

3. Because it is said to descend out of heaven, *v.* 10. therefore it is not heaven; for heaven doth not descend out of heaven.

4. Because it is said, *The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it, v.* 2. *and the glory and honour of the nations, v.* 26. Now that cannot well be understood of heaven: therefore, of some future state in this world when religion shall be uppermost, and every thought brought into obedience. In like manner it may be queried, Whether Matt. xxiv. intend the destruction of Jerusalem, or the day of judgment. I think both.

This is the city; but what churches are in it? How many, and what are they called? Hath this Jerusalem no temple? Yes: *The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it: the Lord God and the Lamb*, that is, the Lord God which is the Lamb—as John xvii. 3—he is the temple.

This is true of heaven. There is no temple, no altar, there are no sacrifices, no ordinances, there: God in Christ is all in all, 1 Cor. xv. 28.

It is true of all the future state of the churches, that there will be ordinances; and so of their present state, there are ordinances,—the word, sacraments, prayer; but the Lamb is the temple, Christ the soul, of those ordinances.

DOCT. That the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb, the Lord God Almighty, is our temple, and is to be so more and more.

Show, I. The further meaning of this by way of explication.

II. The properties of this temple.

III. The use we are to make of it; which is the application.

I. I shall further explain the subject.

Temple is a general word, and signifies a place of worship, whatever it is that is worshipped in it, 1 Cor. viii. 10.—an *idol's temple*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 7. Some think it were more proper to call our churches, or other places of meeting for divine worship, temples, rather than churches. But *the* temple, peculiarly so called, is the house or place of worship built at Jerusalem by king Solomon, whereof we read at large in 1 Kings vi. &c. It was one of the wonders of the world for state and magnificence. When it was burnt, another was built, in Ezra's time; short of that in outward glory, but beyond it, in that it had Christ's personal presence, who taught in it, Hag. ii. Now when I say, Jesus Christ is our temple, I mean, that the temple of king Solomon was a type of Christ, it was one of the shadows by which Christ was signified. He is the substance. This will appear in the following particulars:

1. The temple was the place of the peculiar residence of God; he dwelt there *between the cherubims*, 2 Chron. vi. 1, 2. There his *glory did shine forth*, it *filled the house*, 2 Chron. v. 14. It was called the *Shechinah*.—He was so there, as he was no where else

in the world besides. So Christ, he is the true temple, "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Col. ii. 9.—bodily—not in such a manner as in the temple, but bodily—in a way far beyond it.

His conception was by the power of the Holy Ghost over-shadowing the Virgin Mary, Luke i.

The name given him was Emanuel, God with us; God in our nature; he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, Phil. ii. 6, 7. He was God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. iii. 16. If asked, What think ye of Christ? who is he? Say—God manifest in the flesh, God clothed with a body.

His endowments and perfections were all of them divine; his wisdom, power, holiness, 1 Cor. i. 24. Col. ii. 3. What else was it but the power of God, that wrought all the miracles that were wrought by him, that raised not others only, but himself also, from the dead? It was requisite it should be so; both, that he might bear up under his sufferings, and to give virtue and value to them. If the fulness of the Godhead had not dwelt in him, he could not have been a Saviour for us. We should adore this wise contrivance.

2. The temple was the place of the people's peculiar recourse to God. If any of them had at any time any special business with him, thither they must come, to the temple; and there he promised he would meet with them, and hear their prayers, and do for them as there should be occasion, 2 Chron. vii. 12—16. If they did not come to it, however, they must look towards it.—Now our temple is Christ. If you have any of you, at any time, any thing to do with God, you must go to him in Christ. In Christ it is that he will meet with you: no otherwise.

If you have done amiss and would be pardoned, it must be only in and by Jesus Christ; all your repentings are nothing without him; it is his blood alone that makes atonement, 1 John i. 7. Rev. i. 5. In the temple was the altar.

If you have done well and would be accepted, it must be only in and by Jesus Christ, Eph. i. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 5. The Jews when they pray turn their faces towards Jerusalem to this day, because of the temple that was once there—as Daniel, Dan. vi. 10. Compare 1 Kings viii. 28. So must we towards Christ; not the face of our bodies, no matter whether eastward or westward, but—the faces of our minds and souls, the face of our faith; looking at him as our advocate with the Father, as the great high priest of our profession, as our altar, our temple, our all. We do certainly lose our labour if we do otherwise.

II. What are the properties of this temple?

1. It is the only temple. There is none other besides it. There were many synagogues, but only one temple; "so there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. ii. 5. Saints and angels are no temples for us, no mediators for us. The one temple was to be to them their centre of unity, so should our one Christ be to us, Eph. iv. 4—6.

2. It is the ordained temple; set apart and consecrated by God, in his decree and purpose from all eternity, to be so. "For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore, Heb. vii. 28. *consecrated*, Rom. iii. 25—*set forth*. This decree and purpose of his was declared and published in the fulness of time, to the end that all might take notice of it, especially when he raised Christ again from the dead, Ps. ii. 7, 8. He said to the Jews, *Destroy this temple*, and in three days I will raise it up, John ii. 19—meaning the temple of his body. This was the great sign of his divine commission, John ii. 18. He could give them no greater.

3. It is high and conspicuous, 1 Kings ix. 8. to be seen afar off. When he died he was lifted up upon the cross, John xii. 32, 33. When he went to heaven he ascended up on high. When he comes again, every eye shall see him. God hath not hid him from us, but laid him open to us, that whosoever will may come to him.—Cities of refuge were situate on the tops of hills. Christ is also high in place and pre eminence.

4. It is holy, and beautiful, and glorious. The temple was called the beauty of holiness, Ps. xcvi. 9. To be sure Jesus Christ is so; absolutely, infinitely, eternally holy.

The temple of his body was holy, as it had no seeds of sickness in it, for we never read of any thing ailing him. So in him was no sin, no disorderly appetites, or desires, but all under rule. His eye was never guilty of one sinful glance; his tongue never spake one idle word. Grace was poured into his lips, Ps. xlv. 2. It was absolutely necessary it should be so, for he was to be an offering for sin, Heb. x. 10. And all offerings for sin were to be without blemish, Lev. xxii. 19, 20. Heb. vii. 26.

The temple of his human soul was holy. He received the Spirit without measure, was sanctified throughout. There was in him no defect, no darkness, no guile; all was pure, and holy, and without spot. He was so in all his faculties; his will was perfectly complying with the will of his Father.—It is not so with us. In the temple there was the holy place, and the most holy place, called the holy of holies. Our temple is all most holy, the holy of holies. None is holy as he is holy.

5. It is a living temple. Solomon's temple was a dead thing, made of dead materials, but our temple is a living temple.

Christ personal is so; he *was* dead but he is alive, and it is well for us that he is so.

Christ mystical is a living temple, that is, Christ considered in union with all true believers; he is a

living foundation, and they are the living stones, 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. And both together make a living house, Eph. ii. 20—22.

6. It is a lasting temple. Solomon's temple was long since laid waste; so was Ezra's temple, not one stone left upon another. But our temple abides for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. It is not a tabernacle to be taken down.

III. The improvement.

1. If Christ be our temple, then we should, upon all occasions, rejoice in him, and make our boast of him. The Jews did so of their temple, even to excess; though it was far short of ours, Jer. vii. 4. They would not endure to hear any one speak against it; this was their quarrel with Stephen—"This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place," Acts vi. 13, 14. with Paul, Acts xxi. 28. Nay, before them, with our Lord Jesus himself, John ii. 19, 20. And have not we much more reason to carry it in like manner towards our temple, the blessed Jesus? Should we not boast of him, saying, with holy David, Ps. lxxiii. 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! or with that other good man, None but Christ, none but Christ. This is one evidence of our being the circumcision, Phil. iii. 3. as Paul was, Phil. iii. 7, 8. Can we endure to hear him spoken against, his name dishonoured, his blood and wounds blasphemed, by hideous oaths? There are great outcries for the church, the church, but how few mind the temple, the temple, *this* temple. The less others do, the more let us.

2. Then it concerns us all to get into this temple; not to rest in the outer court of profession, but to press within the veil. The door into this temple is faith, Acts, xiv. 27. When we receive the Lord Jesus, as he is offered to us upon gospel terms, in the way of believing, we are brought into him, we have union with him. He becomes ours, we become his. Now inquire, I beseech you—Is this receiving work done? Are ye in Christ Jesus? If so, there is no condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Joash was hid in the temple, and secured there, and so escaped, 2 Kings xi. 2. This temple of ours is a safe hiding place from guilt and wrath. It is our city of refuge. O refuse not this offer; say not, as Nehemiah, "Who is there that being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in," Neh. vi. 11.

3. All the worship we perform to God every day, of what kind soever, must be in this temple. If it be not temple worship, that is, if it be not offered up in the name of Jesus Christ, it is worth nothing.

We must go about it in his strength, not in our own; for our strength is weakness, John xv. 5. Compare Phil. iv. 13. There were two pillars in the temple—Jachin and Boaz, 1 Kings vii. 21.

We must trust to his merit and mediation alone for acceptation. If we pray, whether in the closet alone, or in the family, or in the solemn assembly, it must be with an eye to Christ. Turn your faces towards this temple. If so, we have a promise, John xvi. 23. Else none. If so, we have an encouraging instance, Ps. xviii. 6. Else none.—It is said, Israel "hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples," Hos. viii. 14. So of many—they have other confidences—their own merit.

4. Is Christ our temple, we must also reckon ourselves his temple, and carry it accordingly, 1 Cor. iii. 16. Even our very bodies, these poor, weak, frail bodies of ours, are dignified and honoured with that title, 1 Cor. vi. 19. Now temples must be kept for him whose temples they are, for his use and service. Then glorify God, 1 Cor. vi. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Temples must not be defiled, buyers and sellers must be whipped out of these temples, that is, the world, lust, sin. How angry was Nehemiah: "And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore; therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber," Neh. xiii. 7, 8. We should do likewise: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

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## SERMON XXXVIII.

### CHRIST IS OUR ARK.

### HEBREWS xi. 7.

*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark.*

THERE are three arks mentioned in the Scripture, and they had all some reference to Jesus Christ.

1. Moses' ark, whereof we read in Exod. ii. 3. This was a basket or coracle made of bulrushes, by means whereof he escaped being drowned in the Egyptian river. Our Lord Jesus Christ is to us that ark. By him we are saved from being drowned for ever in the infernal lake, which burns with fire and brimstone.

2. God's ark, whereof we read in Exod. xxv. 10. This was a chest or coffer of wood, covered with gold, wherein the two tables of the law, written with the finger of God, were kept; a sign or token of the special presence of God with that people. Where the ark went, God went. Our Lord Jesus Christ is to us that ark. By him the law was perfectly kept for us; and if we have him with us, we have God with us as a reconciled Father.

3. Noah's ark, whereof we read in Gen. vi. 14—16. This was a boat or ship, wherein Noah and his family were all saved when the world was drowned. And to this I especially refer, when I say, the Lord Jesus Christ is our ark. Of this the apostle here writes, giving us a short account of the story, how it was—

*By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark.*

Doct. Our Lord Jesus Christ is our ark.

He is that to us, and to all true believers, that Noah's ark was to him, and to his family.

1. There are several things wherein they agree; and,

2. Several things wherein they differ.

*For the first*—They agree as follows:

1. Noah's ark was of God's directing and ordaining; he both appointed that it should be made, and also gave particular instructions how he would have it made, Gen. vi. 14, &c. It was no invention of Noah's; had not God himself spoken to him about it, it had never entered into either his head or heart. Now whose invention was the sending of Christ to redeem and save us, by suffering and dying for us? Was it ours? No; our heavenly Father himself, in infinite wisdom, contrived it for us, Job xxxiii. 24. *I have found a ransom*, Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20. I have found—he seems to glory in it as his own invention. The angels contrived it not for us, but the great God himself. And how should this affect our hearts with love and thankfulness. It did Noah's, no question, that he that contrived heaven and earth how they must be, and every creature belonging thereunto, should so far debase himself, as to contrive a box for Noah, to save him in. Lord, what is man? Lord, what am I? might Noah say. And so must we. The first inventor of some rare device or engine, usually goes away with all the praise; every one commends him. Lo, here is a rare device indeed.

2. The appointing of the ark for Noah, was the result of the world's sin. If the world had not been so vile and wicked as it was, there had been no flood to drown it. If there had not been a flood, there had been no need of an ark to save Noah in. So here, if the first Adam had not sinned, the second Adam had not been revealed: he came to seek and to save that which was lost. If we had not been lost, he had never left the heavenly world. The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. One of the fathers calls the sin of Adam, Felix culpa quæ talem meruit habere redemptorem—*A happy fault which deserved to have such a Redeemer.* Not that we are, therefore, to think ever the better of sin, or to harbour a good thought towards it, or concerning it—either that or any other; no, but the worse. By the breadth of the plaister, you may judge of the length and breadth of the wound. It was a great debt that would not be paid without such a surety.

3. When the ark was ready prepared, Noah went not in of himself, till the Lord was pleased to come and call him, Gen. vii. 1. *Come thou*—and then he obeyed and went in, and the Lord shut him in. So here, though there be a Christ given of God to redeem and save, a ransom provided, yet none are actually redeemed and saved by him, but those only to whom the Lord is pleased to give an effectual call, Rom. viii. 30. Till he says, Come, thou man, thou woman, thou by name, come thou into Christ, we never stir a foot towards him, John vi. 45. As it was with the Jews in Babylon, though a proclamation issued out, yet none moved but those "whose spirit God had raised to go up," Ezra i. 5. Or as with Lazarus, though the stone was rolled away, yet till Christ said, Come forth, he never stirred, Eph. ii. 1. Isa. lxv. 1. Jesus saw Zaccheus, and invited himself to his house, before Zaccheus saw him, Luke xix. And have not we cause, as to ourselves, to adore the free grace of God? Then for shutting him in, that was also God's own act and deed, for his security and safety. He would not trust Noah to shut himself in. So, "we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i. 5. Phil. i. 6. John x. 28, 29. Were our salvation in our own keeping we should certainly lose it, as Adam did; therefore, see that sweet promise, and be comforted in it, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

4. When God put Noah into the ark, and shut him in, he did not leave him destitute. No, he provided comfortably for him.

*He had the divine presence.* It is not, Go thou, but, *Come* thou, implying that himself meant to go along with him, and to abide with him there, and to bear him company. All that God puts into Christ shall be sure of his blessed presence with them, at all times, and in all conditions, Isa. xxvi. 20. "*Come*, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." Perhaps alluding to this very passage: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee," Isa. xliii. 2. "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5. Is not this matter of comfort to a child of God? It was so to Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 14, 15. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

*He had the benefit of a window*, Gen. vi. 16.

For the conveying of light into it, else it had been a dungeon to him, a coffin, a grave; it had been called a darksome house. They that are in Christ are enlightened with heavenly light, Eph. v. 8. God opens the eyes of their minds. And,

For viewing the mighty works of God in the great waters, and the sad desolations made thereby upon the earth, especially the drowning of his obstinate neighbours, that would not be persuaded: now he might see them floating by thousands. It is good for those who are in the ark, Christ, to be often looking abroad, as through a window, into the perishing world, where they may see both matter of

pity as to others; and matter of praise as to themselves, John xiv. 22.

By that window it was that the dove went out, and by the same was taken in again with the olive-branch. They that are in Christ have a window open heaven-wards, by which they send thither, in prayers and supplications; and by which they receive returns thence, in suitable supplies: that window is Christ himself.

He had food also convenient for him, Gen. vi. 21. The ship was sufficiently victualled for the voyage, though a year long. They that are in Christ, are certainly well provided for; he himself is their meat and drink, meat indeed, and drink indeed. "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing," Ps. xxxiv. 10.

5. All the while Noah was in the ark, the ark, and he in it, was tossed to and fro with the winds and waves; yet still, as the waters swelled and prevailed, the ark was lifted upwards towards heaven. The saints of God, in this world, are exposed to various trials, troubles, temptations, Isa. liv. 11.—*tossed with tempests*;—the ship was so in which the disciples were, and yet Christ himself was with them in it. And as the ark lifted heavenward, so we should be elevated towards heaven, weaned from the world, and things below, raised upward to things above, in our thoughts, affections, desires, hopes, 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. This benefit by their afflictions makes them say with David, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted," Ps. cxix. 71.

6. The ark was a means of safety and preservation to Noah. Nay, it alone was so, and there was no other. All that were in it escaped, all that were out of it perished, though they climbed up to the top of hills, and mountains, and high trees; though they clung, as no question some did, to the sides of the ark, all would not do, they were fetched thence, and drowned notwithstanding. So here—there is no Saviour but Christ. Out of him there is no salvation; in him there is no damnation, Acts iv. 12; xvi. 30, 31. Rom. viii. 1. He is set forth, and there is no other, to be the propitiation for sin. There is only one sun of righteousness. There was only one brazen serpent. There is only one mediator, one advocate. People may climb high in parts, gifts, profession, in freedom from common pollutions, in the performance of external duties; but all will not do, unless they are in the ark, unless they are in Christ Jesus. They may cling to him by a temporary faith, but unless they are *in* him they will perish. It was, methinks, saddest of all with the carpenter, who helped to make the ark, to be shut out;—so it will be for those preachers, who are the means of saving others, but are not saved themselves.

7. They that were saved in the ark of Noah, were but few, very few; eight souls; Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their three wives. All the rest of mankind, men, women, and children, were all lost. In like manner, they that are in Christ are but a remnant, Matt. vii. 14. Not many are in him by external profession; far the greater part of the world are Jews, Turks, heathens. Amongst those who are in him by external profession, very few are effectually called, are truly such as they profess to be. There are abundance of hypocrites. In the ark, of the eight, one was a Cham, whatever the four wives were. Among the twelve apostles, one was a Judas. In the destruction of Sodom, only Lot and his family escaped. Of six hundred thousand that came out of Egypt, but two entered the land of Canaan. This should be no offence to us, nor occasion of stumbling. It is better to be in the ark with a few, than to be drowned with the rest for company. Do not ye think so? Would ye not choose so? When the saved come all together, they will be a great many. Let there be one the more for thee this day, and another for thee. It is observable, these eight saved ones in the ark, were all of Noah's family, either born in it, or married *into* it. We have a saying, It is good to be akin to land. Say I, It is good to be akin to God's Noahs; their kindred often fare the better in this world for their sakes, and sometimes in the other world, Luke xix. Acts xvi. All the eternally saved are such, and only such, as are of Christ's family, married to him, born of him. He is no ark to others, as to their everlasting state. Should we not then forthwith flee into the ark?

*For the second*—They differ as follows:

1. The ark was a dead thing; made of dead materials, gopher-wood, pitched within and without, to hold out water; and when it had served that present occasion, what went with it we know not; probably it rotted and became worm's-meat, as other ships are used to do. But our ark is a living ark, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; an everlasting, ever-abiding Saviour.

2. The saved in Noah's ark were but eight, and all those eight were either men or women, not a child among them. But in Christ, our ark, though the saved are but few, they are many eights, and amongst them not only some of both sexes, male and female, but some of all ages, old, and young, and little children.

3. The saved in Noah's ark escaped by a present temporal death only; they were not drowned in the flood of waters as their neighbours were; I mean, the ark was no further instrumental of good to them. But the saved in Christ Jesus are saved by him from eternal misery, from the wrath that is to come, from being burned in hell for ever. As for death temporal, they have no exemption from it, of no kind, in no circumstances; they die suddenly, even as others, a violent death, even as others; but then let the kind and circumstances of their dying be what God

pleases, they are safe beyond death. Lo, here is a nonesuch ark.

Use 1. To you that hear me this day, I have three things to beg of you, not for myself, but for your own souls; and they are the same three things that Noah is said here to have done, to *believe*, to *fear*, and to *prepare*.

(1.) To *believe*, not what I say, or what other men say, but what the great God says, who cannot lie. And what says he? He says there is another flood coming, another deluge; a great one at the end of time for certain; besides, other little ones, that may come, and how soon we know not.

He says there is an ark ready of his own preparing, and that ark is Christ, and whosoever will may come, and be saved by him. Do ye believe this? If not, ye make God a liar.

(2.) To *fear* and be afraid. Noah believed and feared. Why should not we? Fear what? The flood threatened, death, judgment, the wrath to come. Are not these things to be feared? Fear, lest you be found out of the ark; graceless, Christless, Heb. iv. 1. They that are in the ark, must not fear, Luke xii. 32. Others must. The men of the old world would neither believe nor fear, but went on; and what came of it? Did they escape thereby? "The flood came and destroyed them all," Luke xvii. 26—30.

We do believe, we do fear—Then,

(3.) *Prepare*—What? An ark? We do not need; God hath prepared one. But prepare, that is, make ready for this deluge, by getting into this ark of his preparing, renouncing all other. Accept of him, close with him, yield yourselves to him. Do it now, to-day, while it is called to-day. You may go into the ark, before ye stir hence to go homewards.

Use 2. A word to those of you that are in this ark.

Bless God; it is the mercy of mercies; let him have the glory. Do ye think Noah was not deeply affected—Why was I preserved and not such a neighbour, Gen. viii. 20.

Labour to walk answerable to the mercy:

Cheerfully—against base fears. If Christ be thine, come what will, thou art safe.

Fruitfully—in all holiness, and new obedience, as saved ones.

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## SERMON XXXIX.

### CHRIST IS OUR ALTAR.

Hebrews xiii. 10.

*We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.*

By this altar we are to understand our Lord Jesus Christ, concerning whom the Christians may say, they have him, they have him as their *altar*. As for those that serve the tabernacle, that is, the obstinate wicked Jews, that would adhere to Moses, and retain still the ceremonial law, and the worship, and the carnal ordinances thereof, either entirely alone, and by itself, or in conjunction with gospel institutions, they have nothing to do with him, no right to eat of him, that is, to partake of gospel privileges by him.

Doct. That the Lord Jesus Christ is our altar; he is made of God to be so unto us; we are to call him by that name, and to own him as such.

Show, I. What kind of thing an altar is, and what use it was for, and that Jesus Christ is of the same use to us spiritually.

II. What are the peculiar properties of this altar, which distinguish it from all other ordinances.

III. The application.

I. I am to show what an altar was, and that the Lord Jesus is, spiritually, of the same use to us.

An altar was like a square table, bigger or less, according as it was made, to be used in worship. There were altars of remembrance, Exod. xvii. Josh. xxii. We read of altars which the heathen had, and made use of in the worship of their idol gods; and of altars used in the worship of the true God, Jehovah, blessed for ever.

The altars made use of in the worship of the true God, were either occasional, or fixed.

The occasional altars were such as were suddenly made, upon some particular occasion; and when that occasion was over, we hear no more of them. Such was that which Noah reared when he came out of the ark. The first we read of is in Gen. viii. 20. Abraham also, and Isaac, and Jacob, did all rear altars, in the several places to which they came in their travels, Gen. xii. 8; xiii. 18; xxvi. 25; xxxv. 6, 7. Still where they had a tent, God had an altar, which we bring as an instance of the antiquity of family worship—Among God's people, there were family altars.

The fixed altars were those that were made afterwards by God's own appointment; two by Moses, belonging to the tabernacle, and two by Solomon, belonging to the temple: both for the same purpose, only Solomon's were larger than those that Moses made, because in Moses's time the people of God were low and poor, and in straits in the wilderness, but in Solomon's time, rich and full, and much more numerous. Our altars should be as our circumstances are. The same measure of service will not suffice when we are increased and advanced by God, that might when we were low and poor. Of those to whom much is given, more is required. See the different sizes, in Exod. xxvii. 1. Compare it with 2 Chron. iv. 1. The one was five, the other twenty, cubits square.

These fixed altars, both in Moses's time, and So

lomon's time, were two of different materials, and for different use, and diversely placed.

There was one made of wood covered with brass, to burn the beasts upon that were offered in sacrifice to God, which stood without doors in the courts.

There was another made of wood too, but covered with gold to burn incense upon, which stood within in the holy place. Now which of these is Christ; that is, by which of them was he typified and his undertaking for us represented, as our Redeemer and Saviour? By both. He is our alone altar; himself alone is that to us which both these altars were to them.

1. He is our altar for sacrifice. In his dying for us, he offered himself upon himself; he was himself the priest and the altar. There must be a sacrifice offered, or else no atonement. The sacrifice of bulls and goats, &c. would not do: then said he, Lo, I come, Ps. xl. 6, 7. The Son of God himself must be the sacrifice, no other could do. But who will be the priest then, where is one sufficient to manage this sacrifice? Priests were to be *mighty men of valour*. I will be priest myself, said he; and it was so. But where will an altar be had for the purpose, sufficient to bear the weight of this sacrifice? I myself, said he, will be the altar too; and he was so;—sacrifice, priest, and altar, Heb. ix. 14. Now this altar for sacrifice is to be considered,

(1.) In the matter of it. That was wood, covered with brass. Not wood outermost, for the fire would have burnt it, but wood within; brass without signifying the two natures of Christ, his divine nature, and his human nature. The brass of the divine nature secured and safe-guarded the wood of the human nature, else the fire of God's wrath had consumed it; and if so, no atonement could have been made. This was the *eternal Spirit, through which* HE *offered himself without spot to God*, Heb. ix. 14.

(2.) In the figure and form of it. It was exactly four-square, as broad as it was long, and as long as it was broad. By whose order was this? Who appointed it so? The great God himself. This signified the stability and permanency of his undertaking; the square figure is stedfast and stable; *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*, Heb. xiii. 8. —a sure foundation.

(3.) In the placing of it. It stood without, in the outward court; noting, the sufferings of Christ to be here below in this world. Here it was that he gave himself to death, even the death of the cross. Or else, noting the particular place of his dying, which was without the gate, Heb. xiii. 12. Now this altar, and this sacrifice on it, is all the hope we have for reconciliation with God. He alone is our propitiation, 1 John ii. 2. God hath *set him forth* to be so, Rom. iii. 25. And, therefore, to him we must betake ourselves, upon all occasions, trusting to his merit and righteousness alone for peace and pardon: it is impossible we should have it any other way.

2. He is our altar also for incense, in his interceding for us. Note—

The matter of it—wood covered with gold; not with brass as the other, but with gold, pure gold—signifying the two natures of Christ, in both which he makes intercession, as God-man; hence with authority,—"*Father, I will* that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory," John xvii. 24.

Note—He is now a golden Christ, a glorified Redeemer. Heaven makes all gold that comes thither. There was a crown over the altar of incense. Observe,

The form of it: this as the other was four-square, Heb. vii. 25. "He ever liveth to make intercession." Compare Exod. iii. 2. Notice also,

The place of it, *within*, not without; in heaven, not on earth; in God's immediate presence, before the mercy-seat. There it is that his blood cries, and his merits cry—not from the ground, as Abel's, Heb. xii. not in humiliation but in exaltation, Zech. vi. 13. Hence we may take occasion,

(1.) To adore the infinite wisdom and free grace of God the Father, in contriving such a way of redemption for us, and in performing that contrivance. He himself appointed the altar; he himself appointed the Saviour, 1 Cor. i. 30. "*Made unto us of God* wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

(2.) To examine ourselves, what interest we have in this oblation, in this intercession, in this double altar. Is it ours? Can we say we have an altar? The way to know it is by inquiring what use we make of it. They only have interest in it that make use of it every day, in every thing,—for pardon for what we do amiss, for acceptation of what we do well. Many have none, nor desire none. Many have such as they should not, "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images," Hos. x. 1, 2. "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing," Hos. viii. 12.

(3.) To exhort, by all means, to acquaint yourselves with this altar; to know Christ Jesus the Lord, as your only atonement, and only advocate; to fly to him as such, 1 John ii. 1, 2.

Further, concerning these altars, note,

1. It is said of each of them, They had four horns, one at each corner—for ornament, and for use.

The use was double. *To bind the sacrifice to.* The beast, from a principle of self-preservation, was

loth to die; they were forced to bind him, Ps. cxviii. 27. There were no need of cords to bind the blessed Jesus; he gave himself, *I am he.* That which bound him was his Father's will and his own inclination, his love to poor sinners. The call is to us, to bind all our sacrifices to the horns of this altar. So we must, or there will be no acceptance, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

*For guilty malefactors to take hold of:* as Joab, 1 Kings ii. 28. Adonijah, 1 Kings i. 50, 51. When we have sinned, what else have we to take hold of? He alone is our city of refuge. The horns were four, pointing to the four corners of the world, east, west, north, and south. Our Lord Jesus is a universal Saviour, to all nations and people. Whosoever will may come, Isa. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17. There are no rails about this altar.

2. It is said, the *altar did sanctify the gift*, Matt. xxiii. 19.

How sanctify it?

By being offered there in due circumstances, by a right priest, in a right manner; the gift received a kind of adherent holiness from the altar. Whereas before it was a common beast, like the rest of the flock or fold; now it became hallowed, it had a peculiar worth and value put upon it. The Lord did own it as his, and accept of it for atonement. So Christ, by his merit and mediation, sanctifies all our gifts, puts a worth and value on them before God. As they come from us they are worth nothing, Eph. i. 6. Therefore, in all our performances, as we must look to him as our alone temple, so we must present all upon him as our alone altar, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Heb. xiii. 15. The voice from heaven testified, Matt. iii. 17; xvii. 5. "*In whom*"—not only *with* whom—"I am well pleased."

3. They that served at the altar did eat of the altar; —*others have no right to eat.* But we have; we that hold fast our profession stedfast. Compare 1 Cor. ix. 13; x. 18. When a beast was offered, unless it were a burnt-offering, wherein God had all, God had one part, the priests another, and the offerer another. Some think they are called peace-offerings because all these three did agree peaceably so to divide.

The offerer with his part did make a feast for his friends, and they did eat together.

The priest with his part maintained his family.

God's part was burnt upon the altar.

Now our altar is Christ: the same is also our sacrifice. Of him we have all a right to eat, and may each of us take our part in him, and be refreshed and nourished by him if we will. But multitudes will not eat, that is, will not believe in him; for eating is believing, John vi. 53, 54. By faith we make his death, and sufferings, and resurrection, and intercession our own, applying it to ourselves as we do the meat when we eat it. To this we invite all, but most make excuses, Matt. xxii. O, be yet persuaded. Consider, all other things are not food for you, Isa. lv. 1, 2. This is excellent food, none in the world fare better, than those that eat of this altar. It is most excellent fare, and great plenty of it. This is true also of the Lord's supper, in the nature and design of it; it is a feast upon a sacrifice. Christ is not sacrificed there, as the papists say, who therefore call it the sacrament of the altar, and him a prop priest that administers it. He was sacrificed once for all; (awhile ago, to symbolize with them, some would needs have the communion table in churches set altar-wise;) but there he feasts his family and friends upon the sacrifice, that is, his body and blood, and they are welcome, Cant. v. 1. But multitudes refuse to be his guests. They choose rather to serve the tabernacle, nay worse, to serve their sins, their humours, their prejudices. They will repent it one day.—The Jews prefer Moses, therefore as yet they have no right to eat.—As the uncircumcised had no right to the passover, so the unbaptized have none to the supper.

II. What are the peculiar properties of this altar?

1. It is the alone altar; besides it there is no other. Saints and angels are no altars for us; our own righteousness is not; nay, God's mercy, out of Christ, is not. None but Christ, none but Christ.

2. It is the appointed altar, appointed of the Father. He reared it, therefore there is ground of hope that he will accept us, if we come to him in this way, which is his own way.—Jeroboam's altar and Ahaz's altar were their own, not God's, therefore they were rejected.

3. It is a living altar. Other altars, as temples, were dead things, made of dead materials; but this lives, and lives for ever.

4. It is a lasting altar; after it there is to be no other. It needs no repairing, as other altars do.

III. The application.

Exhortation to all; to renounce all other, and to make Christ alone your altar, that is, in all your addresses to God to look at him alone for acceptance, Col. iii. 17. "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months," Rev. xi. 1, 2. Bishop Usher* expounds this of two sorts of people bearing the Christian name. Some that worship in the outer court. And some in the temple; at the altar: that is, some in the spirit rejoicing in Christ Jesus; others, in a formal, slighty, Christless way.

* This illustrious prelate was promoted to a bishopric in 1620, and in 1625 was made Archbishop of Armagh. He died in 1655.

—These are left out, to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles; others are measured, to be the Lord's marked, sealed, saved remnant.—O then see to this.

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## SERMON XL.

### CHRIST IS OUR ALL.

COLOSSIANS iii. 11. latter part.

*But Christ is all, and in all.*

YOU have had an account of thirty-nine things, which Jesus Christ is made of God to us—foundation, food, root, raiment, head, hope, refuge, righteousness, light, life, peace, passover, portion, propitiation, freedom, fountain, wisdom, way, ensign, example, door, dew, sun, shield, strength, song, horn, honour, sanctification, supply, resurrection, redemption, lesson, ladder, truth, treasure, temple, ark, and altar. Now, to what purpose is it to multiply more particulars? I am this day, from this text, to show you, he is our *all;* or, as the apostle expresses it, our *all in all.* Twice, and but twice, is this phrase found in all the Bible; here, and in 1 Cor. xv. 28. Here, it is spoken of Christ, what he is in this world; there, of God the Father, what he will be to us in the other world,—our complete happiness alone, without any other person or thing to help.—And the one follows upon the other. If Christ be *all in all* with us now, the Father will be *all in all* to us to eternity;—else not.

DOCT. That Jesus Christ is a Christian's all, or, his all in all.

There are two other Scripture phrases to the same purpose,—*The root of the matter,* Job xix. 28. and *The one thing needful,* Luke x. 42. He alone is sufficient, himself without any other, to make us happy, and without him nothing else can do it.

What is a sick man's all in all? A physician.—A condemned man's? A pardon.—A captive's? A ransom.—A hungry man's? Food.—A thirsty man's? Drink.—A man's in debt? A surety.—This, in all respects, is our condition, and all this he is to us.

Show, I. Wherein Jesus Christ is all in all.

II. What we learn from it.

I. Wherein is the Lord Jesus Christ all in all? He is so to all persons—whether Jew, Greek, Barbarian; no advantage, no disadvantage. Are they in Christ, learned or unlearned, it is all alike. And he is so in all things.

1. In respect of the benefits we receive from him, and by him, and through him.

(1.) Jesus Christ is all in all in *election,* Eph. i. 4. He hath chosen us *in him,* in him as our *head.* The free grace and love of God is the head of election. God did, therefore, choose us, because he did love us; and he did therefore love us, because he would love us. No other reason can be given, John iii. 16. Deut. vii. 7, 8. But the head of the elect is Christ. God the Father gave them to him to be his body, and him to them to be their head. But for him, and his undertaking for us, there had been no such thing as electing of us.

We are *chosen* to be *conformed to him,* Rom. viii. 29. that being made partakers of his image and likeness, we might be loved of the Father. There is reason, therefore, to love him above all.

(2.) He is all in all in *creation.* But for him the world had never been; we ourselves had never been. We owe our being to him, John i. 3. Heb. i. 2. Young men are exhorted, Eccl. xii. 1. to remember their *Creator*—their Creator is Jesus Christ. We are all exhorted, 1 Pet. iv. 19. to commit our souls to him as unto a faithful Creator. Having made them, he will look after them.

(3.) He is all in all in providences; universal, to all; special, to his church; particular, to ourselves, John v. 22. He alone hath the ordering of all events that are concerning us. What pleases him, that he doth. If he be for us, it matters not who is against us.

(4.) He is all in all in redemption. He alone is the Redeemer, and there is no other but he; he paid the price alone; there are no joint purchasers with him, for the satisfying of God's justice. He fought the field alone with the devil, whose captives we were, and by destroying him, he rescued us, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

(5.) He is all in all in conversion. When the fulness of time is come that a poor soul is to be brought home to God, whose work is it, who manages it? Not the man himself for himself. How should he? He is dead in trespasses and sins. Not the minister; he is the tool, the instrument, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. It is only the blessed Jesus, by his Holy Spirit. He is all in all in the work of conviction, and illumination, and humiliation; he opens the eyes, and he softens the heart, taking the stone away, and turning it into flesh.

(6.) He is all in all in justification. Who was ever justified without him? His righteousness is it alone wherein we appear before God—are acquitted, accepted. There is not a sin pardoned but for his merit sake. His name is the Lord *our righteousness,* Jer. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30—he is made *righteousness.* The quarrel between us and God is taken up by him alone; he is our peace, and he our propitiation, and he our advocate, 1 John ii. 2.

Sure, faith is all in all, Rom. v. 1.

If there were no Christ, there would be no faith.

(7.) He is all in all in consolation. The Spirit, who is the comforter, is of his sending, John xiv. 16—18. And how doth the Spirit comfort, but by telling the soul that Christ is ours. Say that, and you say enough.

(8.) He is all in all in preservation, Jude 1. We are not our own preservers, neither do we preserve one another. He alone keeps us, *keeps us from falling*, Jude 24. from falling away; from being tempted, from being overcome by temptation. Peter's faith had certainly failed, but for his praying for him, Luke xxii. 30, 31.

(9.) He is all in all for teaching. He is the best teacher, John iii. 2. Matt. xi. 29.

(10.) He is all in all for strength. If he be our arm, for doing—our back, for bearing—we can do, we can bear, all things.

(11.) He is all in all at death. There is no dying safely without him, without an interest in him. We shall certainly perish in that Jordan if he do not part the waters, and make a lane for us to go through, Ps. xxiii. 4. Never fear to look death in the face, if Christ be thine. There is no dying comfortably without him. It is he alone that takes the sting out, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. This is the cordial of cordials in a dying hour. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin," (1 John i. 7.) says one good man; "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit," (Rom. viii. 1.) says another. Even those that will not own him for their all in all living, will acknowledge him so dying: then, None but Christ, none but Christ.

(12.) He will be all in all at judgment. That is all in all to a man then, that will appear for him, and plead his cause, and bring him off. Now, that the blessed Jesus doth for those who are his.

He is the judge; the absolution must come out of his mouth.

He is the advocate, to plead on our behalf.—This is one of those for whom I shed my blood; he hath loved me and owned me, and now I will love him, and own him.

He is our plea also; our best plea, our only plea. What canst thou say, sinner, why sentence of condemnation should not pass upon thee? This I have to say, Christ hath died for me, yea, rather, is risen again. But so will every one say: what proof is there of this? I have accepted of him, believed in him, yielded myself to him, so have not others. Now if this must be our plea then, let it be our plea now, renouncing all others.

(13.) He will be all in all to eternity. What is the heaven of heaven but to be with Jesus? Phil. i. 33.—in the vision and fruition of him, to behold his glory, and to partake with him in it? For this he prayed, John xvii. 24. As if he himself could not be well there without us. To be sure we cannot without him.

2. In respect of duty to be done to him. As he alone is our Alpha, the beginning, the first, from whom all comes; so he alone is our Omega, the last, to whom all tends.

(1.) He is all in all to be known. Paul thought him so, and tells us as much for our imitation, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 8—10. The understanding part of a man can find no solid satisfaction in the study of any thing else without him, but in him it is abundantly to be found.

"Si Christum noscis, satis est si cætera nescis.
Si Christum nescis, nihil est si cætera noscis."*

"In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," Col. ii. 3. that is, not only as the subject, with whom it is, but as the object, about whom it is, conversant.

(2.) He is all in all to be chosen. He is not only the truest truth, but the best good. Nothing we can name is so worthy of our choice as he is. Creatures are, all of them, jointly and severally, but partial good: each one of them good for some one thing and no more; food will not clothe us; clothes will not feed us; but, lo, here is a universal good, good for every thing. Is not this the Christ? All in all for food; all in all for clothing.

(3.) He is all in all to be loved. It is one of the titles that the spouse gives him in the book of Canticles, *ch.* i. 7. *O thou whom my soul loveth!* and David, Ps. lxxiii. 25. There are many persons and many things that our love is closing with, and running out upon, but I dare say none of them all deserves it as the blessed Jesus doth. There is no danger of thy over-loving him.—Love him with all thy heart, soul, mind, might, and he deserves it, both upon the account of his loveliness in himself, and his lovingness to us, Ps. xlv. 2. 1 John iv. 19.

(4.) He is all in all to be desired. It is one of the names given him, The desire of all nations, Hag. ii. 7. that is, worthy to be desired by all; though actually desired but by very few. What say ye brethren, is your desire towards him? But what kind of desire is it? Warm desire; hearty, lively desire; like that of the hunted stag after the water-brooks, or the gaping earth after the rain? Can ye say, with the church, "The desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee?" Isa. xxvi. 8. There is good reason why it should be so.

(5.) He is all in all to be delighted in, Phil. iii. 3. He is to be made our song, the head, the gladness, of our joy. Rejoice we may in the good things that God gives us; he is angry if we do not, Deut. xxviii. 47. but it must be with trembling, Ps. ii. 11. There is no trembling required here; we may let forth the utmost strength of our souls when we are solacing ourselves in him.

(6.) He is all in all to be trusted. As the strength

* If you know Christ it is enough, if you are ignorant of other things.—If you are unacquainted with Christ, it is nothing if you know every thing else.

of joy may be laid out on him, so the strength of faith and hope; and therefore of joy, because of faith and hope. He never failed any that put their trust in him, for he is faithful and true; in him all the promises of God are yea, and in him amen, 2 Cor. i. 20. He is all in all in the promises. Take any one, either concerning the life that now is, or that which is to come, and act faith upon it, according as it is, and try if it do not prove as I say.

(7.) He is all in all to be thought on. He is the most excellent, lovely, amiable, sweet, comfortable object that our thoughts can possibly expatiate upon. "How precious," says the Psalmist, "are thy thoughts unto me, O God," Ps. cxxxix. 17. The covetous man's money is all in all with him, to employ his thoughts about; the ambitious man's honour, and the sweet of it, as Haman; and the voluptuous man's sports and recreations; but the godly man says of Christ—He is my all in all.

(8.) He is all in all to be followed, as our pattern for imitation. We have before us a whole cloud of witnesses, but none like Christ, to be absolutely rested in, as a pattern, and sampler. He is a copy without a blot, Eph. v. 1, 2. Heb. xii. 2.

(9.) He is all in all to be preached, 2 Cor. iv. 5. And certainly it is the best preaching, the most affecting, the most edifying, the most saving. To read or hear a sermon, by a Christian minister, before a Christian congregation, and Christ not once named from the beginning to the end, how absurd is it! And yet too many such there are! Tell it not in Gath. How unlike herein to blessed Paul, who did breathe Christ in all his sermons.

(10.) He is all in all in the Scriptures. When you take your Bibles in hand to read a chapter, and have read it, reflect when you have done; and say, What is there of Christ here? He is the treasure in that field, the marrow in that bone, the manna in that dew, the diamond in that ring, the milk in that breast, John v. 39.

(11.) He is all in all in the sacraments. What is baptism without Christ? An insignificant ceremony; a laver without water. His blood for justification, and his Spirit for sanctification, are the main in that ordinance, 1 Pet. iii. 21. What is the Lord's supper without Christ? A table without meat, or drink. O take heed of Christless sacraments, not only the bread of the Lord, but the Lord the bread, should we press after.

(12.) He is all in all in sabbaths. The day is his, it bears his name; and yet how many come and go, and Christ is not once thought of.

(13.) He is all in all in praying. A Christless prayer is of as little worth as any of the other. As when we pray in our own strength, and not by the help of the Spirit of the Son;—and when we rely upon any thing but him, and his merit, and mediation; either for acceptance, or an answer.

II. What improvement are we to make of this subject?

1. For discovery. Here is a mark whereby to try ourselves—What think ye of Christ?

2. For reproof and admonition—to those to whom Jesus Christ is nothing at all.

3. For exhortation to all—to learn him—to live on him.

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## SERMON XLI.

### CHRIST IS OUR ALL. (Continued.)

COL. iii. 11. latter part.

*Christ is all, and in all.*

MY brethren, it is now about eleven months since I began to show you what Jesus Christ is made of God to us in forty particulars. Some who were here then and since, are gone now into eternity, while we are yet alive before the Lord, within hearing of this joyful sound. That which the whole runs into, as the sum total, is this—That Jesus Christ is our all in all. Prove this, and there needs no more proving. Improve this, and we improve all. Now to prove it was the work of the last, to improve it is to be the work of this, sabbath.

The improvement we are to make, by way of inference from all that hath been said, is this:

I. It should put us upon solemn and serious self-examination. And I am glad it proves to be a sacrament day, because of the suitableness of that duty by way of preparation for that ordinance, 1 Cor. xi. 28. I hope you have done it already, for fear of the worst: if not, do it yet. For this once, shall *I* do it? Shall *I* put the question, and will you make the answer? not outwardly, with the voice, but inwardly, in your own consciences, as before the Lord. We shall be examined for certain shortly, in another manner, by another examiner. Doing it well now may prevent doing it then, for "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged," 1 Cor. xi. 31. The thing to be inquired after is,—Whether Jesus Christ be our all or no, our all in all? Would you know? Look within. Inquire,

1. Have ye renounced all other things for your all, and have ye received him to be your all. This must be; God hath so ordered it. The terms are so laid; there is no remedy. If we look for any other we must seek another gospel. Now,

*Is the renouncing act done?* Have ye seen every thing else, besides Christ, to be so far from being likely to make an all for you, that it is even just nothing at all? and, therefore, have ye disowned, disclaimed it, saying, This is no portion for me, no propitiation for me, and so of the rest? Three things

are to be thus renounced—the devil, the world, and the flesh; likewise, our sins—our own righteousness—and all our worldly possession. Away with them. Two of these, the two first, God doth call for; and the third we must be willing to part with, if he *should*; else, how can Christ be said to be our all?

*Is the receiving act done?* Have ye heartily closed with the gospel offer, and taken Christ as your all? I do not mean in word and tongue only, for that will not do, but in deed and truth, inwardly, heartily? The hand is faith, John i. 12. I do not ask whether it were not a trembling hand, whether it were not done with some difficulty, as a thing against the grain; but whether it be *done*, really and truly done?

2. It may be known by the value we put upon him, and by the daily use we make of him.

*That which is our all we esteem and prize above any thing else, let it be what it will.* It is uppermost with us; it hath the pre-eminence. Now what say ye, brethren? Is Christ uppermost with you? Hath he in all things the pre-eminence? Col. i. 18. I have often showed you there is reason he should. He best deserves it, Ps. xlv. 2. It is the Father's will he should have it, John v. 23. And, if he shall not be uppermost, he will be nothing. Either he will be in the throne or not at all. It is said there was a motion made in the senate at Rome, that Jesus Christ might be taken in among the rest of their gods; answer was made, No: because if he were one he must be all; they must put away all the rest; he would be partner with none of them. The poor, low, mean thoughts that many people have of Christ, is a clear argument that he is far from being their all; they heed him not, neither his friendship nor his fellowship.

*That which is our all we make use of daily, upon all occasions wherein it may be advantageous to us.* A potion, a balsam, a friend, we so use. If we want any thing, our trust is to it, our reliance is on it. Now is Christ made use of by us daily, as our foundation to build on, our food to feed on, our refuge to flee to, our righteousness to rest in, our wisdom to guide us, our way to walk in, our lesson to learn, our ladder to climb by, our temple to look towards when we pray, our treasure to have recourse to when we want any thing, our ark to run into when the deluge threatens, our altar to offer all our gifts on? If he be not all this to us, who is, what is? We must have it somewhere. It is all one to have no Christ, as to make no use of him.

3. It may be known by our concernedness for him, and carriage towards him.

*Concernedness for him.* That which is a man's all he is careful to keep, cautious not to lose, Job ii. 4. The reason is, because his life is his all; when that is gone, all is gone with him. Now is Christ our life? Shall skin for skin, or skin after skin, and all we have, go for him, to get him, to keep him? What is his name, and honour, and glory, and gospel, and day, and book, and people, and ordinances to us? Are they all precious, more precious than thousands of gold and silver? If it go well with them, can we rejoice, and grieve if it be otherwise? It was so with David, as to ordinances, Ps. lxxxiv. 10. and as to his church and people, Ps. cxxxvii. 5, 6. Never call Christ thy all unless this be so. It may be known also by our

*Carriage towards him.* That which is a man's all he loves, delights in, is pleased and satisfied with. Is it so with thy soul towards Christ? Ps. lxxiii. 25. Dost thou love him above all? Are thy desires towards him, thy delight in him? Is he the head, the gladness, of thy joy? Dost thou see him to be enough for thee, and canst thou say, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee—to see thy power and glory. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness," Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, 5.—satisfied; None but Christ, none but Christ. Now by these marks we may try, if we will be faithful to our souls, whether Christ be made all this to us, or no, in these forty things which ye have heard of; that is, whether we be in Christ Jesus, 1 Cor. i. 30.—whether we be true believers; whether we be for heaven or no? I beseech you, be not unwilling to come to the touchstone: once well done and it is done for ever.

II. Here is ground for sharp reproof to those to whom other things are all in all, and Christ is nothing at all.

Are there any such? Certainly there are. But are there any such here? I wish there may not be. Why, who are they? They are of several sorts.

1. With the Jews to this day Moses is all in all. They are altogether for the ceremonial law, not believing that the Messiah is come, and hath put an end to it. Their condition is sad, John viii. 24. It is our duty to pity and pray for them. There were, it seems, among the Christians, some that were for both Christ and Moses too; but that would not do, Gal. v. 2—4. Those among ourselves with whom a pompous worship is all in all, are too like them.

2. With the papists, in matters of faith, the church is all in all. They believe as the church believes, though what that is they know not. They practise as the church enjoins, without inquiring—is it agreeable to the mind and will of him that is the King of the church? All for the mother, no matter for the Father: The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these, Jer. vii. 4. When Christ sent forth his apostles, their commission was not, Go teach what the church commands, but what Jesus commands. There are those who please themselves with drinking healths to the church.

3. With the same people, in matters of devotion, the Virgin Mary is all in all. They go on pilgrimage to her shrines; they vow to her; pray to her. For one chapel and altar that Christ hath, she hath twenty, forty. For one Pater noster there are ten Ave Mary's. They call her, queen of heaven, gate of glory, fountain of mercy, mother of all grace; their saviouress, mediatress, advocatress. In the Psalm where God and Lord is, they put Lady, and apply all the passages to her blasphemously; our Lady's psalter. They call to her to command her Son to do what they would have him to do. We are told, at Diep, in Normandy, there is an image of our Lady with a rod in her hand, to correct her Son if he refused her.

4. With the same people, in matters of power and supremacy, St. Peter is all in all. The popes call themselves the successors of St. Peter. If in any thing, it is in denying his Master, and in cutting off the ear of Malchus with his sword. Their church lands they call the patrimony of St. Peter; they count him the rock upon which their church is built, as if he were the foundation, not Christ. God deliver me from that church that is so founded. When the time of its fall comes, it will appear it was sand-built, not rock-built.

5. With some the light within is all in all. It is so

*For guidance and direction.* As it dictates they say we are to do; without trying by the written word, whereas—"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them," Isa. viii. 20. Time hath been, said Paul, "I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth," Acts xxvi. 9.—and it is said, it shall be again, John xvi. 2. Also,

*For justification and salvation.* Some have said they expect it not by a Christ crucified at Jerusalem, but by obedience to the light within. By which I am well assured they will never have it, Acts iv. 12. We deny not a light within, but we deny its sufficiency in these two things.

6. With some, and those too many, their own righteousness is all in all. The merit of their own performances, what they are, have, do, suffer; their prayers, tears, alms-deeds, their innocency, and freedom from common pollutions that are in the world through lust, as the Pharisee, Luke xviii. These are the things they trust too; at least, in conjunction and copartnership with Christ. These with a little, to eke, from God's mercy, and Christ's merit—as the old ignorant Jews, Rom. x. 3. No; if this were so, how is Christ all in all? See the mind that Paul was of, and be like-minded; "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him," Phil. iii. 7—9.

7. With some carnal pleasures and sensual delights are all in all. Let them have their fill with these, and they have enough. Wine, and music, and dancing, and mirth, and jollity; sports, and pastimes, and recreations; horses, and hounds, and hawks, and whores; these their hearts are upon—rioting and drunkenness, (Rom. xiii.) making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.—And will this do? In sober sadness tell me, canst thou think thou art made and maintained for such a purpose? Eccl. xi. 9. Jam. v. 1, 5.

8. With some worldly wealth is all in all. Let them have money enough, and land enough; and much good may others have with God, and Christ, and heaven, with grace enough, and glory enough. Poor creature, what a miserable choice dost thou make! Prov. xxiii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17. See a sad instance of the consequences of this folly, Luke xii. 16—21.

9. With some a thing called reputation is all in all. To have a name amongst men, especially great men; to be in honour and power, and to have preferment. They will sell God and their souls to compass it, as one of the popes did to be pope. And what a vain, poor, empty thing is this when they have it—a puff, a bubble! How uncertain! of how short continuance! how many ways exposed!

10. With some, in one word, self is all in all. The great idol of the world is loving self, and seeking self, and pleasing self, and applauding self, Phil. ii. 21. O let us all take warning, and look to it. Our first lesson in Christ's school, is to deny self, Luke ix. 23.

III. Then suffer, I beseech you, a serious word of exhortation; it is to you all, without exception, one or other:

1. To make Christ, Christ, I say, and Christ alone, your all in all.

If you *make* him so to yourselves, it is the best evidence you can have, that God hath *made* him so to you. Make him so by a cordial and speedy closing with him, accepting of him as your foundation, food, root. Remember the forty things you have heard explained. I hope you will, though preached to you in a despised barn; nay, a barn which has been cursed and cursed again by such as pass by; but, the curse causeless shall not come. Teach them your children, and when they have learned them, explain them to them as well as you can. It will be a means to increase your own knowledge. God will make it so, Matt. xxv. 29.

Your baptismal vow binds you to it. Into what are ye baptized? Was it not into Christ? And did ye not put on Christ? Gal. iii. 27. A Christian, and Christless! how sad it is! A Christian, and Christ

nothing to him! Is it so with Mahometans?—with papists? Is the pope nothing to them?

If Christ be not all in all with you, he will be nothing at all to you—for justification, salvation.

If Christ be not all in all with you, you are nothing at all to God; only as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal;—your praying is nothing, your repenting is nothing.

2. To walk as those that have made Christ their all.

Circumspectly, watchfully. Learn Paul's lesson—"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Phil. i. 21. "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him," Col. iii. 17. Pray, repent, deny yourselves, give alms, suffer reproof; all in his name, strength, merit.

Comfortably, cheerfully. There is cause. Thou art a happy man. All is thine if Christ be thy all; "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines: the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation, Hab. iii. 17, 18. "Christ is all, and in all."

THE END.

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